

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 28 JULY 1910

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

The TREASURER replied—

(a) At the request of no local body. The work was authorised by the Government exercising the functions of a harbour board under the provisions of section 10 of the Harbour Boards Act of 1892.

(b) By and for the benefit of shippers and the general public.

(c) The Gladstone Harbour trust fund.

TERRITORIAL SEPARATION.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*), in moving—

That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when Queensland should be divided into three States, and when Central and Northern Queensland should each be granted a separate Constitution subject to the Constitution Act of the Commonwealth of Australia—

said: The subject is a big one, and one which would occupy a good deal of time if we were to deal with it fully. Unfortunately, for an unexpected reason, I shall not be able to speak for more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour myself, but I hope the debate will be carried on by those who are in favour of this desired change in our Constitution. The motion only proposes to bring about a political division of Queensland into the parts into which it has already been divided by its natural and climatic conditions. We have the tropical North, the semi-tropical Centre, and the temperate South. Now, the question is not by any means a new one, but I feel that the present time is a most opportune one to bring it before this House. I think the question has been discussed as far back as 1862; and at this particular juncture we are threatened with a Redistribution of Seats Bill, which will take away a number of members who represent the North and the Centre. We are fortunate in the fact that the leader of the Government has on more than one occasion spoken strongly in favour of the separation of Queensland into three States; indeed, he has said he would favour its division into four States.

The TREASURER: Since federation?

Mr. RYAN: Since federation—long since federation, as I will show before I sit down. In May, 1905, he was in favour of dividing Queensland into four States, and I trust that he is still of the same opinion.

The TREASURER: Four States?

Mr. RYAN: He was certainly in favour of three, and possibly in favour of its division into four States. I trust he is still of the same mind, and that he will use his influence to have this motion passed through the House. Provision is made in the Commonwealth Constitution Act for the division of States into new States. Section 124 provides—

A new State may be formed by separation of territory from a State, but only with the consent of the Parliament thereof, and a new State may be formed by the union of two or more States or parts of States, but only with the consent of the Parliaments of the States affected.

It is with a view to indicating to the Commonwealth Parliament that the Queensland Parliament desires the division of Queensland into new States—the Centre, the North, and the South—that I am bringing forward this motion at this juncture. A very distinguished member of the Federal Legislature, Mr. W. G. Higgs—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! I must ask hon. members to preserve silence. (Hear, hear!) There are a large number of

Mr. Ryan.]

THURSDAY, 28 JULY, 1910.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (W. D. Armstrong, Esq., *Lockyer*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH,
WICKHAM TERRACE, BILL.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*), on behalf of Mr. Macartney, chairman, brought up the report of the Select Committee on this Bill.

Ordered to be printed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday, 4th August.

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—Annual report of the Inspector of Orphanages for the year 1909.

QUESTIONS.

RETURN OF PROPERTIES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*) asked the Treasurer—

1. Will he inform the House if the circular issued from the Home Secretary's Office, dated 3rd June, 1910, to local governing bodies, asking for a return giving the number of properties in their respective divisions—

(a) Freeholds of unimproved value of over £300;

(b) Properties, other tenures, of the unimproved value of £300 and over—was issued at the instance of his department?

2. Has he any objection to informing this House if this information is sought with the ultimate object of imposing a land tax?

The TREASURER (Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, *Enoggera*) replied—

1. The circular was not issued at the instance of my department.

2. The Home Secretary, whose department issued the circular, has already informed the House that the information was sought for statistical purposes.

RAILWAY APPROACH TO GLADSTONE JETTY.

Mr. BRESLIN (*Port Curtis*) asked the Treasurer—

(a) At the request of what local body did he authorise or request the Railway Department to construct the railway approach to Gladstone Jetty?

(b) By whom and for whose benefit is this approach exclusively used?

(c) Who at present is held responsible for cost of construction and charges?

conversations going on. There can be no objection to hon. members conversing together, but I must ask them to do so in such a tone of voice that their remarks will not reach the Chair.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYAN: I was saying that in consequence of the Federal Parliament having shown some disposition, or some members of it having shown some disposition, to fall in with the idea of dividing Queensland into separate States, I am bringing this motion forward because the consent of this Parliament is necessary for that division, and no other consent is necessary except that of the Commonwealth Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. RYAN: It is a matter of my opinion, and I give it as my opinion that the consent of this Parliament only is required, and not the consent of a referendum of the people.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Authorities differ.

Mr. RYAN: Authorities differ no doubt, but there is a method of testing which section really applies—whether it is section 123 or section 124. In my humble opinion it is section 124 that governs the position, and the only consent that is necessary for Queensland is “the consent of the Parliament thereof.” I trust that the Government will not endeavour to bring forward the argument that the consent of the people is necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: An eminent authority says so.

Mr. RYAN: An eminent authority may say so.

Mr. LENNON: Who is it?

Mr. RYAN: But we have an eminent authority—the High Court—which can decide the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: “Quick and Garran” are against you.

Mr. RYAN: I do not think “Quick and Garran” say any such thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will quote it.

Mr. RYAN: The hon. gentleman can quote it, but, notwithstanding the opinion of “Quick and Garran,” I give it as my humble opinion that the section that governs the position is section 124, and that all that is necessary is the consent of the Parliament of this State. The matter can be tested in the High Court.

Mr. TOLMIE: Do you want us to sell Queensland?

Mr. RYAN: I do not expect the Parliament of this State to sell Queensland, but I do expect the Parliament of this State to do justice to the different parts of Queensland. I do not think the senior member for Drayton and Toowoomba is prepared to do that, if I may judge of his opinions by the interjection he has just made. Queensland is twenty-five and a-half times the size of Tasmania, and it is seven times the size of Victoria. Each of those are States of the Commonwealth. In Northern Queensland we have, roughly speaking, 122,000 people; in Central Queensland we have 70,000 people, as against 28,000 people, which was the population of Moreton Bay when it was separated from New South Wales in 1859. It is a singu-

[Mr. Ryan.

lar thing that, after 120 years, in the vast area of Australia we have only 4,000,000 people. Now, compare the position with that of the United States of America after 120 years of history. We find that they started with 13 States and 3,000,000 of people, and now they have 46 States with a population of 74,000,000.

Mr. TOLMIE: Take Canada for a comparison after 300 years.

Mr. RYAN: I am taking the United States because that country has a peculiar disposition for local self-government; and, if the people of Queensland had had the same disposition as the people of the United States, long before to-day we would have had Queensland divided into three States and the population would have been much larger than it is, and the business of administration would have been conducted much more efficiently and much more easily than it is at present.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And much more costly.

Mr. RYAN: Not more costly. Many distinguished members who sat in this Chamber in the past have admitted that fact, and I shall refer to two, one of whom still sits in this Chamber. I refer in the first place to Sir S. W. Griffith. Here is an extract from a statement made by him, which was quoted by Mr. G. S. Curtis in a speech which he made in this House in 1903—*Hansard*, volume lxx., page 506. And here I may say that Mr. Curtis has done good work for the cause of separation of Queensland into three States. Sir S. W. Griffith used these words—

Attention was naturally called to the remarkable circumstance that the Southern members solidly voted against the almost unanimous requests of the Northern and Central members; a very remarkable circumstance, because, if hon. members would put themselves in the position of persons looking on at these proceedings, they would see that the people of the Northern and Central districts asked for a thing which in the history of the world had been almost universally conceded to people making similar requests. A not unreasonable inference to be drawn from that was that the Southern members were actuated by motives of selfishness in considering the interests of the Southern part of the colony in opposition to the interests of the colony as a whole.

Mr. Kidston said something similar in 1896—*Hansard*, volume lxxv., page 887. He said—

While I do not wish to introduce anything of an acrimonious nature into the debate, I must say that there are only two theories by which I can account for their conduct—

That is the conduct of Southern members—One is that they are so modest that they think we cannot get on without them; the other is that it is selfishness and greed on their part, and they do not want to lose the very serviceable milk cow they now have.

Those are Mr. Kidston's words with regard to Southern members in 1896.

Mr. GRANT: Give Mr. Higgs's opinion in 1900.

Mr. RYAN: I am not referring to Mr. Higgs's opinions at all. I am referring to the opinion expressed by the present leader of the Government in 1896 and the opinions also expressed by him in 1905.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That has no significance now.

Mr. GRANT: Give us his opinion in 1905.

Mr. RYAN: I will give that directly, but there are some other remarks made by the

hon. gentleman on that occasion that I wish to quote, as they apply to himself just now. He said—

The head of the present Government said in 1891—
About a year ago I came to the conclusion that the only solution of the question was for us to concede territorial separation.

Now, I suppose, the hon. gentleman will do as former Premiers have done, and so long as he can by any means keep the other districts attached to the South he will do so.

I trust that those words are not recoiling on himself now. The remarks made by Mr. Kidston on that occasion with regard to revenue also apply to the case to-day. He said—

The surplus revenue drawn from the Central district and spent in the South during the last three years is as follows:—In 1893, £140,045; in 1894, £94,409; and in 1895, £112,550; or a total of £347,000. When it is remembered that I am simply giving the figures as prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Districts Bill—figures that are entirely, if I may put it that way, Southern figures, and which take no cognisance or account of the very large revenue which is drawn yearly from the Central district, and spent out of it, and which forms a continual drain upon our resources, must be something very like, and probably greater than, the whole revenue of Moreton Bay at the time they received separation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In what year was he speaking?

Mr. RYAN: In 1896.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Pre-federation.

Mr. RYAN: Yes, pre-federation, and what was true then is true to-day.

Mr. MURPHY: More so.

Mr. RYAN: Yes, more so, as the hon. member remarks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why?

Mr. RYAN: I will tell the hon. gentleman. Because prior to federation there was this objection to separation in the State: that if the different districts separated they might raise a tariff against each other, and that objection is wiped out now under federation. Now that the hon. gentleman has afforded me the opportunity, by his interjection, I will quote what Mr. Chamberlain wrote about the matter on the 15th June, 1896. Mr. Chamberlain, writing from the Home Office, said—

The question appears to me to be pre-eminently one which should be settled by local agreement. Even if such local agreement had been reached, the difficulties and risks attending any attempt to divide the colony are, under the present circumstances, very grave, and in its absence, unless an overwhelming case should be made out against the existing arrangements, Her Majesty's Government would not be justified in asking the Imperial Parliament to undertake so delicate and difficult a task, especially in the face of the opposition of large numbers of the representatives of the colony.

I call the hon. gentleman's attention to these words—

Most, if not all, of these difficulties will disappear should ever the colonies of Australia enter into a federal union at an early date.

That was the opinion of Mr. Chamberlain on the subject.

Mr. GRANT: Give us Mr. Kidston's opinion in 1905.

Mr. RYAN: Yes, I will do so. In the *Daily Mail* during May, 1905, there is a report of an interview with Mr. Kidston on the creation of new States, and according to that report—

Expressed the opinion that it would be much better for Queensland if the country was divided

into three States, as it would assist in developmental work considerably. Certainly it might endanger to a certain extent the extreme North becoming a black-labour country, but that had nothing to do with the great question of closer government. It was federation that had given the separation movement its death blow. He recognised some disadvantages that would result from the subdivision of the State, but that would be overbalanced by the tremendous advantages to the new States in the way of increased power and closer interest in the development of their territory. Those acquainted with the local conditions in Central and Northern Queensland well knew that to be a fact. Separation would do no harm to the South. Their trading relations with the North would not be materially affected in his opinion. Notwithstanding federation, Queensland's destiny should ultimately be three great States, if not four, and in spite of all the difficulties, probable events would shape in that direction. It would not be by any means difficult to rearrange the political boundaries of all Australia in a way that would give twice the number of States so that general trade and political interests would be more akin than at present.

That also appeared in the *Rockhampton Daily Record*. That is my authority. I do not know whether the hon. member contests any of those statements.

Mr. GRANT: Many of the statements in that paper I do.

Mr. RYAN: Well, I give the hon. member the opportunity now of saying whether he denies the truth of the words I have quoted. No reply.

Mr. LENNON: He cannot deny it.

Mr. RYAN: There are many other points that I could put forward on this vast and interesting, and what I consider, as I believe most hon. members consider, most important subject for the consideration of this House, but, as I have said, I have unexpectedly to leave at 4 o'clock. But I trust the debate will be carried on. I contend that for the purpose of decentralisation and for the purpose of effective administration, separation is desirable. Everybody knows that if you want anything done in the Mines Department, the Lands Department, the Education Department, or any other department, people in the Central and North have to come right down here to the south-eastern corner of the State to get it done, with the result that the business is not done as expeditiously or as satisfactorily as it would be done if we had a seat of government at Rockhampton and another at Townsville. Owing to that fact and to the fact that the revenue is not apportioned to the different districts in which it is raised, injustice is done to the Central and Northern parts of Queensland, as is shown by the figures quoted by Mr. Kidston in 1896. Separation will remedy that injustice, and also give a general incentive to the development of the resources of the different portions of the State. I have much pleasure in moving the motion.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): I hesitated about rising, thinking that some hon. member on the other side of the House would be prepared to reply to the very strong and convincing arguments put forward by the hon. member for Barcoo.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We could not do so until it was seconded.

Mr. LENNON: Having overlooked that, I must go on now, or lose my right of speaking on the motion, although I am quite unprepared to speak. I am in thorough accord with the motion moved by the hon. member for Barcoo, and have been associated with the separation movement in North Queens-

Mr. Lennon.]

land for a great many years. I was a member of the Separation League there, and was familiar with the whole work of

[4 p.m.] that body. About this time the Central district was also carrying on a similar agitation for separation from the Southern part of Queensland, and I know that they approached the Northern separatists in the hope that the Northern men would co-operate with the Central men and thus make their case stronger, and approach the Government as a combined body representing a very large extent of the territory of Queensland. Unfortunately, however, the Townsville, or the Northern people, hesitated—in fact, they refused to join hands with the Rockhampton people, which I regarded, and still do, as a very grave mistake on their part. They were not prepared to join the Rockhampton agitation. The North Queensland Separation League had certainly been in existence years before the agitation was started in Rockhampton, and probably they prided themselves to some extent on the fact that they were the older body, that they had more population, a more extensive territory, and a greater diversity of interests, and no doubt reasons of that character persuaded them from joining the Rockhampton people. A rather amusing incident that occurred at one of the meetings of the Townsville Separation League—possibly about twenty years ago—when some of the old hands, as they were called, expressed themselves as opposed to joining the Rockhampton people because they had always conducted their own affairs without any assistance from outside. One man said he had been twenty-nine years in Townsville, another said he had been twenty-five years there, and another twenty-four years, and they did not see what was to be gained by joining the Rockhampton people in this agitation. A gentleman present got up and said, "You have been here twenty-nine years, you twenty-four years, and you have been here twenty-three years; in fact, you have been here until you have become blue mouldy," and then walked out of the room. I think that gentleman sized up the position pretty well—they were too much wedded to their own ideas. If they had joined the Rockhampton people in those days, it is certain we would have secured territorial separation many years ago.

The TREASURER: Had not the labour problem something to do with it?

Mr. LENNON: The labour problem may have had something to do with it, and I would very much like to say here, in connection with the remark quoted by the hon. member for Barcoo, as emanating from Mr. Kidston, that in those days the Northern country was likely to go over to black labour. I give that statement a most emphatic denial. I had personal experience in the matter as one strongly concerned in territorial separation in Townsville; and for a long time we had the support of the sugar-planters throughout the North in favour of territorial separation, but when Sir Samuel Walker Griffith brought in the Bill to do away with kanaka labour, nearly every one of the sugar-planters refused to contribute any further towards the expenses of the league. That goes to show that they knew very well if we got separation under the conditions then prevailing, that the black labour would go.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That reason has disappeared now.

[Mr. Lennon.]

Mr. LENNON: However, when we have this new Bill promised by the Federal Parliament to continue, with some degree of certainty, the bounty system, there will be no hope for black labour in the North; but I also think that if you wipe out the excise and bounty, and leave it entirely to the import duty, we would have a great danger indeed of black labour again gaining ground in the North. The black labour question is at present practically settled, yet there are many people who would like to have it back if they could, and the bounty on top of it. Seeing that North Queensland contains a population approximating 130,000 people, and Central Queensland also has a population approaching 80,000 people, it will be admitted when you compare their condition, as pointed out by the hon. member for Barcoo, with the condition of Queensland when it attained independence, that they are justified in seeking for it now; and the remarks which fell from the Secretary for Lands the other night, when he showed that the Government was disinclined to give them anything like fair treatment in the North and Central divisions in regard to the Lands Department business—he showed in his speech last night how reluctant they are in giving any sympathetic consideration to the opinions of the Northern people regarding their own requirements.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite the reverse. We have recently been giving them greater facilities.

Mr. LENNON: The hon. gentleman said last night that, as far as he could ascertain, Townsville did not want anything—that the gentleman in charge of the lands office there was insufficiently employed. I have received frequent complaints from people in North Queensland of the delay and difficulties that meet them at every turn in regard to their business with the Lands Department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Cite a case, and I will deal with it.

Mr. LENNON: I have cited many cases in this House, and also to the previous occupant of the Lands Department, in regard to the difficulty the Northern people have in getting satisfactory information. I will give an instance—I cannot give a name: A man asks for a certain thing from the Lands Department. He sends down to the representative of his district, for example, and the representative approaches the Lands Department—take the case of a neighbour in my own district, Ingham and Geraldton—they are populous districts—and then we are told by the Secretary for Lands that the matter must be referred to the land commissioner at Cairns. The matter is referred to the land commissioner at Cairns, and when he has time to deal with it—having a good deal of outside work to do as well as office work—he deals with the matter, and makes a report to the Lands Department, and then the Lands Department, after six or seven weeks, informs the member for the district what is the decision in the matter. Is that not a cumbersome and roundabout way of doing business?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How much quicker would you do it under separation?

Mr. LENNON: Very much quicker. If a person at Ipswich or Gympie has business with the Lands Department, he can get it settled very much quicker than under the conditions I have stated. It must be the case. I would like to say that long before the

agitation for territorial separation arose in Queensland, the Hon. John Macrossan, then member for Townsville, ably advocated in this House, or secured a promise, at all events, that we would get at least financial separation. Accounts were kept for that purpose for many years, but I believe the practice has now been discontinued.

The TREASURER: That is so.

Mr. LENNON: I remember a deputation was sent from Townsville to England in regard to territorial separation—the latent power to grant which was vested in the Crown. That was preceding federation. The power was a latent power, and had not been exercised since the separation of Queensland from New South Wales. Constitutional authorities admitted it was a latent power, but it was never regarded as a relinquished power, and it was only considered necessary by the Home Office and the Secretary of State for the Colonies that if a sufficiently strong case could be made out, that this latent power could be crystallised into action, and territorial separation might be granted without the consent of the Queensland Parliament. During pre-federation days it was not necessary to have the approval of this House at all. It was sufficient to make out an overwhelmingly convincing case for the Home authorities to exercise this power, regarded as latent, and grant separation. Since that federation has come. It will be remembered that by clauses 123 and 124 of the Constitution, a separation of any portion of a State may be effected—which may be erected into a separate State with the consent of the Parliament of that State. There is not a word about any referendum or getting a majority of the people of the State. It is sufficient, in order to have it passed, to get the consent of the State—which, of course, means the Parliament of the State—in order that the Federal authority may grant the prayer of the people desiring separation.

The TREASURER: Section 123 provides for a referendum.

Mr. LENNON: I have the authority of the hon. member for Barcoo, and, without in any way saying anything offensive to my hon. friend, the Treasurer, I think the opinion of the hon. member for Barcoo on the matter might very well be regarded as superior to the Treasurer's.

The TREASURER: We have got "Quick and Garran" for that.

Mr. LENNON: And I prefer to accept my hon. friend's opinion. I will not detain members to-day, and intend to speak only five minutes. It is well to point out to the members present, who may have forgotten all about the agitation for separation in the North many years ago when it got the support of all classes, that when Sir Samuel Griffith brought in a Bill to do away with kanaka labour, the sugar-planters immediately ceased to contribute to the support of the funds, which proves conclusively that the views of Mr. Kidston in those days that it would be a black labour country won't bear scrutiny for a moment. It proves quite the opposite—that North Queensland is essentially a white man's country, and that is an assurance which I am quite certain will commend itself, if not to the members of this House, certainly to the members of the Federal Parliament, that North Queensland is essentially a white man's country, and will so con-

1910—q

tinue. Now, to show the persistence and enthusiasm and the courage of the people, I will just give one illustration of what they have done, and I am speaking from my own intimate knowledge. To show their earnestness, determination, and pluck to carry on the agitation for territorial separation, the people of Townsville arranged a carnival, and in one day they raised the large sum of £1,300 for that purpose. They have sent deputations all the way to London. Dr. Ahearn, I remember, was prominently associated with those deputations. The Hon. W. V. Brown, who was then in London, was asked also to join the deputation to wait upon the Secretary of State for the Colonies. What his action was in the matter need not be stated, but I know Dr. Ahearn went all the way from Townsville to London for the purpose of furthering the interests of territorial separation for North Queensland. Now, that agitation went on for many years, and after the Hon. John Macrossan had tabled several motions similar to the motion tabled to-day by the hon. member for Barcoo, Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, then Premier of Queensland, offered the North—and the Centre also—a scheme in substitution of their desires for territorial separation. He offered a scheme of provincial councils, which might have been, from his view, sufficient for the purpose, but not giving them the full authority desired by the separation leagues of those two centres. I think it is a very regrettable circumstance that they were not satisfied with the offer made on that occasion, for I feel persuaded that had they accepted that settlement of the case—provincial councils both for the North and Central portions of the State—by this time those two important territories would now be separate States under our Federal Constitution, and that I am sure every person in this House will realise would have been of enormous advantage to Queensland. But many people in this House seem to think that Brisbane is Queensland; that is the mistake they make and have always made. If they will only allow their prejudice to disappear for a moment, and take into account the diversity of climate and interests, and the very great differences which exist in the North, Centre, and the South, they must realise that the people of the North and Centre require specific and different treatment to what the Southern people do. I have been a separationist from my very first residence in North Queensland, and had the honour of attending a deputation here in Brisbane which waited upon His Excellency Sir Henry Norman, then Governor of Queensland, when we presented a petition—some miles in length and bearing over 60,000 signatures—praying for separation for North Queensland. That occurred something like twenty-five years ago. I have continued an ardent believer in separation from that date to this, and when we have regard to the Federal Constitution, which provides specifically for the erection of separate States, of new States—of necessity it must apply not only in Queensland but every other State, because under the growing circumstances of our population in Australia it must of necessity occur that the necessity for new States will arise in various parts of our extensive territory, and I am glad to have the opportunity of stating that I am as ardent for separation to-day as I was so long ago. I shall be glad to hear what hon. members on the other side will have to say.

Mr. GRANT: Why make it a party question?

Mr. LENNON: What party question is there in it?

Mr. Lennon.]

Mr. GRANT: When you say members on the other side of the House are inevitably opposed to it.

Mr. LENNON: I judge by the attitude of the hon. members interjecting, as well as by their action on many other occasions outside.

Mr. GRANT: Not at all; you are entirely wrong.

Mr. LENNON: I shall be delighted to find that I am entirely wrong. No person is more ready to retract if he is in the wrong than myself. I think it will trouble anyone who may reply to the argument so ably put forward by the hon. member for Barcoo, to show that territorial separation would not only be beneficial to the people of the North and Centre, but beneficial to the whole of Queensland and to the whole of the Commonwealth. (Hear, hear!)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*): If anything were needed to show the hollowness of the whole business, we need only look round the Chamber—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: To see how few hon. members are supporting the hon. gentleman who introduced this motion.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: There is a big deputation going on.

Mr. LENNON: That is not fair argument.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We find few on the benches. I was not aware that there was a deputation at the moment proceeding.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You should not jump at conclusions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am perfectly entitled to jump at such a conclusion, the benches being vacant.

Mr. LENNON: You will admit that you are in the wrong?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No, I will admit the benches are vacant. If the matter be of such urgent importance, and knowing that the time when a matter of this sort can be discussed is between half-past 3 and 6 o'clock on Thursday, surely some other hour might have been arranged at which the deputation could have been held. I remember having read of a Dutchman who lived when George III. reigned—one Rip Van Winkle. He was a simple, good-natured man; he was a lazy sort of fellow, because he did not support his household; consequently, his wife quarrelled with him.

Mr. BOWMAN: This is an old yarn.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, it is an old yarn, entirely applicable to new circumstances. Rip Van Winkle, as we all know, was driven from his family, and he went away into the wood with his gun, and whilst there he heard his name called several times, and he answered, and he was invited by the man who called him to carry a keg to the inn. He carried the keg to the inn, and he found it contained a very pleasant liquor, of which he imbibed freely, and he went to sleep for twenty years. When he woke up he returned again to his home, there to find that things had changed. King George III. was no longer on the throne, and the American people were enjoying a Constitution of their own. Twenty years had passed, and a big change had taken place. Now, to my mind there is a great deal of the Rip Van Winkle about this separation movement. It has been

[*Mr. Lennon.*

quiescent for about twenty years. Twenty years ago it was a live question in North Queensland.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It is a live question since federation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Twenty years ago, I suppose, it took priority; it overshadowed every other political question. It overshadowed every other social question, and I really think that it overshadowed every other political question. It was then a burning question, but it has been quiescent for years since then; and now, like old Rip Van Winkle, after some twenty years, it makes its appearance once more in the political arena.

Mr. LENNON: You are a strong unificationist.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When Rip Van Winkle awoke from his slumbers he found that there had been a great change.

Mr. LENNON: All your arguments are in favour of unification.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Rip Van Winkle found that George III. was no longer King of England, and that the American Republic was founded. The separatists seem also to have been aroused from their long slumbers.

Mr. LENNON: He quoted your leader very effectively.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Prior to federation.

Mr. LENNON: And what he said since federation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Prior to federation; and let me tell you that the separation question prior to federation and since federation are totally different questions. I am sorry that circumstances prevented the hon. member for Barcoo from dealing with the subject in an effective manner, as I know that he could have done.

Mr. LENNON: He dealt with it effectively all right.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The arguments which the hon. member adduced may be very easily set aside. The hon. member mentioned that at the commencement of the American federation there were thirteen States and a population of 3,000,000 people, and then he went on to say that the creation of a number of new States was followed by a large increase in the population. The increase in the population of the American Republic was not due to the creation of new States at all, but because of its geographical situation—its close proximity to the great multitude of the people of Europe who could have ready access to their shores. If Australia were only five or six days from the multitude of people in Europe there would be a great many more people coming here than come here at the present time. I do not think that the fact that there were afterwards forty-six States in America had anything to do with the increase in the population at all. If we had millions of people here, instead of hundreds of thousands, then there might be some urgent need for a readjustment of territory.

Mr. LENNON: Then you think that Queensland should not have separated from New South Wales?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I do not say that. I think that Queensland did right to separate. I am at one with the hon. gentleman there. When the question

of separation was a live one in Queensland, I, as a Southerner, thought that it would be a good thing to give separation to Central and Northern Queensland at that time.

Mr. FOLEY: What has made the difference?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will tell the hon. gentleman directly. Many of the questions that vitally concerned Central and Northern Queensland and which really kept the whole agitation alive have since passed away, and these great questions are now absorbed and controlled by the big central and National Government of Australia.

Mr. LENNON: You mean the Customs, chiefly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And defence and post and telegraphs.

Mr. LENNON: But chiefly Customs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Primarily, the great factor of revenue. But things have all changed since it was a live question in the State. The conditions here now are as much changed as in the days of America when that imaginary individual I quoted just now, lived. When Rip Van Winkle awoke from his sleep and went back to his village and his people, he was a harmless old man, and I look on this resolution as being just as harmless at the present time.

Mr. LENNON: Don't you treat it too lightly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no business in it.

Mr. LENNON: Oh, isn't there?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are not even good fireworks in it.

Mr. LENNON: We are not looking for fireworks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then I cannot see any reason for it being introduced.

Mr. MURPHY: You will find that it is a big gatling gun.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In order for separation to be accomplished—even if it were possible—it must be by the consent of the people of the State, and, if that were given, then the people of Central Queensland and the people of Northern Queensland would be very sorry indeed.

Mr. LENNON: Not the Northerners. I can speak for the North.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They would find that they had nothing short of a white elephant.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: No wonder we get neglected when we have sentiments like that coming from the Ministry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I say that it is in the interests of Central and Northern Queensland that they should remain as they are at the present time.

Mr. LENNON: We will be glad to hear why you say that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If it is possible to accomplish it, it can only be so accomplished at the expense of Central Queensland and at the expense of Northern Queensland.

Mr. LENNON: Why do you insinuate that it is impossible? You say, "If it is possible to accomplish it."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: For two reasons. In the first place, I do not think for one moment that this House

would approve of it, and then it would be necessary to secure a vote of the whole of the people of the State, and I know quite well that the referendum is not now a popular subject with the Labour party.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON: Yes; it is what we want to affirm as a principle.

Mr. BOWMAN: Yes; with all other questions bar religion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then there can surely be no objection to taking a referendum of the people on this question, if it is held that section 123 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth does not impose it. I say that section 123 does impose that obligation upon us before it can be passed over to the Commonwealth.

Mr. LENNON: We are prepared to have a referendum in the two districts concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. It must be referred to the whole of the people of Queensland.

Mr. LENNON: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Labour party only want a referendum taken in the way that pleases them.

The TREASURER: As they always do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And if the answer of the people is not in accordance with their preconceived ideas, the people are wrong.

Mr. LENNON: Nothing of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Constitution does not say that the referendum must be taken in a portion of the State, but in the whole State. It must be a referendum of the whole State, seeing that the whole State is concerned.

Mr. LENNON: We contend that the referendum of the people is not provided for at all, but that it rests with this House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will show why I think it does provide for a referendum. Have you heard this question of separation raised at all lately? I did hear that it was raised by Mr. Higgs during the recent Federal election. He talked about it in a certain place, but nobody there cared a fig about it. And they endeavoured to raise a public meeting on the question at Rockhampton.

Mr. LENNON: The people cared sufficiently about him to give him a thumping big majority over your man. (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There were just a few—only a few—who attended that public meeting called for the purpose of arousing an interest in this separation movement.

Mr. GRANT: The Rosewood meeting was a big assembly compared with it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Rosewood meeting was a large assembly compared with the meeting called in a populous city to discuss a big question and put their views before the people who were present. I say that the question of separation is as dead as Julius Caesar.

Mr. LENNON: Didn't you hear what the hon. member for Rosewood said about that meeting at Rosewood—that there were twenty-eight women and two men there.

A LABOUR MEMBER: And a dog. (Laughter.)

Hon. D. F. Denham.]

Mr. LENNON: Do you call that a popular meeting?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; I do not. But I say that the meeting which was called to discuss the question of decentralisation did not secure as large a number of people as that meeting at Rosewood which the hon. member for Rosewood says was attended by thirty women and two men. This meeting was called on a question of local importance, but one which the hon. member does not consider sufficient to take a referendum on, and the hon. member must admit that the whole thing was a hollow business when they could not secure a representative meeting.

Mr. LENNON: What is your authority for saying the number that attended Mr. Higgs's meeting was small?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The junior member for Rockhampton, Mr. Grant. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. LENNON: He happens to be the senior member. He is no authority.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He must be an authority, as it is his constituency, and he knows how things are moving there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Of course the authorities are all on the other side.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In 1887 Sir S. W. Griffith introduced into this Assembly a Bill—

to make provision for dividing the colony into districts for financial purposes and for the keeping of separate accounts of the general and local revenue and expenditure of the colony and for the expenditure within the several districts of the revenue raised therein.

And in the following year a Bill was introduced having for its objects just that which I have now read, with the added words—
and for the constitution of grand committees of revenue and expenditure within the several districts.

The first Bill was known as "The Financial Districts Bill," and the second, which was introduced by Mr. Macrossan, was [4.30 p.m.] known as "The Decentralisation Bill." Neither of those Bills was passed into law, but up to 1902 the accounts were carefully separated as between Southern, Central, and Northern Queensland.

Mr. LENNON: Those figures prove that the North was consistently robbed for the benefit of Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Those are rather harsh words to use. But whilst in those days everything consumed in Central and Northern Queensland was imported and paid duty from the South, or from oversea, they contributed heavily to the revenue. What is the position to-day? They are to receive £1 5s. per capita regardless of the imports that come to them. That is rather an unfair proposition. Queensland is contributing twice as much revenue to the Commonwealth as Tasmania and more per head than the other States, yet we are only to receive back the £1 5s. per capita; and if there be separation of Northern and Central Queensland they will not get the benefit of the days when they were paying heavily through Customs, but will merely get the per capita return from the Commonwealth. I say that in the pre-federation days—in the days before 1901—this question of separation was a live one in Rockhampton and Central Queensland

[Hon. D. F. Denham.]

and in Townsville and Northern Queensland; and a vigorous agitation was kept up. In 1891, it so far succeeded in its desire to secure separation that the Secretary of State for the Colonies said, "If the Queensland Parliament refuses its consent the Imperial Parliament will grant it." Just at that juncture federation intervened, and because of that the separation movement gradually weakened. It was quite within the power of the Imperial Parliament to grant separation regardless—

Mr. LENNON: Prior to federation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Prior to 1895. From 1895 to 1901 it was vested in Her Majesty the Queen. Up till 1901 it rested with the supreme authorities at home and not with our local or State Parliament; but under the Constitution things are different. It no longer rests with the Imperial Parliament, it no longer rests with His Majesty King George, but it rests with the State immediately concerned, and with the Commonwealth. Section 124 of the Constitution Act deals with the alteration of the limits of a State; and there is no doubt that as far as that section is concerned the question has to be decided in the affirmative by Parliament, and there has to be a reference to the people of the State.

Mr. LENNON: Read it in conjunction with the next section.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will read section 123 and also section 124. Section 123 deals exclusively with the alteration of the limits of the State, and is quite different from 124, which deals with the formation of new States. Section 123 says—

The Parliament of the Commonwealth may, with the consent of the Parliament of a State, and the approval of the majority of the electors of the State voting upon the question, increase, diminish, or otherwise alter the limits of the State, upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed on, and may, with the like consent, make provision respecting the effect and operation of any increase or diminution or alteration of territory in relation to any State affected.

Section 124 says—

A new State may be formed by separation of territory from a State, but only with the consent of the Parliament thereof, and a new State may be formed by the union of two or more States or parts of States, but only with the consent of the Parliaments of the States affected.

Mr. LENNON: There is no word about a referendum there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will now quote two authorities. One is a recent authority which favours the view that in the formation of a new State there is no need to refer the question to the people; and the other is "Quick and Garran," which says it superimposes upon section 124 the provisions of section 123. There is no gain in taking advantage of any point in discussing anything of this sort; but it is well to know the facts and the opinions of authorities on such a big question. I am quoting now from W. Harrison Moore, Dean of the Faculty of Law in the University of Melbourne—

By section 124 the Parliament may form a new State by separation of territory from any State of the Commonwealth, but only with the consent of the Parliament thereof, or may form a new State by the union of two or more States or parts of States, but only with the consent of the Parliaments of the States affected.

That is the view of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. LENNON: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I shall now quote from "Quick and Garran"—

If section 123 is applicable to the creation of new States out of old ones, then an additional condition precedent must be added to section 124, which does not appear on its face, making it read: "only with the consent of the Parliament of the States affected and of the majority of the electors of the States voting upon the question."

There you are, Sir. On the one hand you have one authority writing on the Constitution, and on the other another authority.

Mr. LENNON: You admit that honours are easy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have quoted both opinions, and I am inclined to think that for this important question of constituting new States there should be an appeal to the people. The writer on the Commonwealth of Australia from whom I quoted earlier proceeds to point out what is an anomaly, and that, I claim, helps to sustain the contention of "Quick and Garran" that section 124 needs to be supplemented by section 123. In regard to section 123 Professor Moore, at page 594 of the "Commonwealth of Australia" says—

Section 123 confers powers upon the Parliament to increase, diminish, or otherwise alter the limits of a State, but requires that for such alteration, as well as for the arrangements incidental thereto, the consent shall be obtained not merely of the ordinary authority therein—the Parliament of the State—but of the electors of the State. The result is very curious. The State Parliament may without the consent of electors diminish its territory, for it is expressly authorised by section 111 to surrender any part of the State to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Parliament may immediately transfer the territory so surrendered to another State, but, in order to make the transfer good, the electors as well as the Parliament of the State receiving the accession of territory must assent to the increase of "its limits." Again, by section 124 a State without any approval of electors may be cut asunder and made into two or more States, or may lose its separate existence altogether by union with another State—in either case no more than the concurrence of the State Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliament is required.

For the sake of argument, let us allow that the State Parliament alone can deal with the matter. I would like to emphasise once more that the Imperial Parliament had authority to subdivide Queensland against the wishes of the Queensland Parliament in the pre-federation days; but now we are certainly agreed that the Imperial Parliament has no interest in the matter whatever, and that it rests entirely with the State and the Commonwealth Parliaments—

Mr. LENNON: You are correct up to that point.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And later on with the people of Australia. While "Quick and Garran" say that section 124 is superimposed by section 123, I will allow, for the sake of argument, that it is only required that the State Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliament shall be in accord to secure the constitution of new States. But they will go into the combination having only such representation as that august National Parliament chooses to give them.

Mr. RYLAND: They will give them a fair thing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Tasmania, when it entered the combination, had it laid down that it should have at least five members in the House of Representatives. I am exceedingly doubtful whether Central

Queensland, with its limited population of some 73,000, could secure anything like such a number of representatives.

Mr. LENNON: Under the Constitution every State has the same number of senators without regard to population.

Mr. RYLAND: Only the original States.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member jumps too soon. I am speaking of the House of Representatives. I say the Federal Parliament has the power to admit to the Commonwealth new States carved out of existing States, if the States concur. Now, will the hon. member agree with me that that august assembly, the National Parliament—

Mr. LENNON: I will agree that it is august in the true sense of the term.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will the hon. member admit that that august body has power to admit, but has no power to create a new State?

Mr. LENNON: Out of surrendered territory it has power to create a new State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are in accord, at any rate, that it is necessary to have the concurrence of the State Parliament in order to secure this. Now, what possible chance is there of securing such concurrence, seeing that there has been nothing in the nature of a demonstration, nothing in the nature of an agitation, nothing in the nature of a popular request, that such shall be accomplished?

Mr. LENNON: Well, regard it as a reply to your motion for a redistribution of seats.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A very poor reply. We are taking care of you, but here you are losing yourselves. When separation was a live question in pre-federation days, the people of Central and Northern Queensland had real grievances against Southern Queensland. Have they a grievance, or may they have a grievance, against the Commonwealth? Have they any fault to find with the way the Commonwealth is administering affairs towards the State of Queensland? Or have they now any fault to find with the way Southern Queensland is acting towards them? What gave rise to the agitation for separation in former days? We know quite well that underlying that agitation was the tariff. Central and Northern Queensland were not primary producers—indeed in those days Southern Queensland was not to any extent producing food products other than cattle and sheep.

Mr. MAUGHAN: That was not all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is my first step—that the tariff was the big grievance against the South. Central and Northern Queensland in those days were importing nearly all they required.

Mr. LENNON: And contributing a greater revenue per head.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course they did through the Customs. They were paying duty upon primary products and upon manufactured products, and therefore they were paying into the revenue a greater proportion per capita than was being paid by the people in Southern Queensland. But that does not obtain to-day, so that the big cause for separation has entirely gone.

Mr. LENNON: We cannot get the Brisbane Government to take an interest in our sugar industry now.

Hon. D. F. Denham.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Oh, yes, we are prepared to help the big sugar industry, and they will have to thank the Government for securing such an amendment in the law as will put that industry upon a better basis.

Mr. LENNON: They will thank me more than they will thank your Government for it. (Government laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How the hon. member shifts his ground! However, I do not mind whether they have to thank the hon. member for Herbert, or whom they have to thank, so long as that industry be placed upon a good foundation, and that this Government will help to do in every possible way.

Mr. LENNON: I am glad to hear it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The law has been found to be inadequate, and therefore it is to be amended to meet the case; and if the Federal Government will so amend the law that we can see security in the industry the same as in other industries—

Mr. LENNON: You know they will amend the law.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then the difficulty that has stood in the way will be removed. We see, therefore, that the reason which led to the cry for separation in the eighties and nineties has passed away. No. 2 reason was alluded to by the hon. member for Herbert, when he spoke about the labour for the cane-fields. Now, the hon. member knows quite well—everybody knows—that that question has been settled once and for all.

Mr. LENNON: I know that many of the friends of the Government would reintroduce coloured labour if they had the chance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In those days it was a serious menace to the North. They cannot plead that now. The cry that coloured labour was being retained against the wishes of the North has passed out of the arena of practical politics. It is the settled policy of Australia that white labour shall be the labour in the cane-fields.

Mr. RYAN: No thanks to this Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Never mind whom you have to thank. I am only showing that there is no business in this resolution—that there is no justification whatever for attempting to get separation now that the reasons which kept the movement alive in former days have passed away.

Mr. LENNON: As this Government will.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: As all things do. We do not hope to be eternal; that will only happen when we pass beyond this sphere, but we shall remain here as long as it is the will of the people that we should continue in office. That is the position we take up. We are not, like the Labour party, going back on the will of the people.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The other point is that formerly they could not get attention to matters of detail in connection with their post and telegraph system, because they had to come to Brisbane. Now they have to go a great deal further—they have to go past Brisbane, past Sydney, and right down to Melbourne to get redress of any grievance in connection with the post and telegraph service. Another point had reference to defence. In those days the people

[Hon. D. F. Denham.

of the North said they were not adequately defended, and they wanted control of their own finances so that they could look after their own defence. That matter of defence is taken from the State Parliament now, and has passed to the Federal Parliament. So that there really is no justification, or rather, to put it another way, the justification alleged to have existed in former days—pre-federation days—for separation has now passed away. What is the remedy for matters of which the North and Centre now claim through those members who have spoken in favour of this motion? The remedy lies in larger representation in the Federal Parliament, and that can only be brought about by an increase in our population. This Government is seeking to bring more people to the country in order to increase our population.

Mr. LENNON: And 80 per cent. are brought to Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Well, they pass the North to come to Brisbane. We are seeking to secure more effective and fuller representation in the Federal Parliament by bringing more people into the State. The representation of the State in the Senate will not, of course, be affected by population, as each State, no matter how large or small, may be its population, is allowed only six representatives in the Senate. Will dismemberment as proposed in this motion secure more influence for this State in the Federal Parliament? I do not think so. I think that object will be best accomplished by having more members in the House of Representatives, and we can only secure a larger representation by having a greater number of voters in the State, whereas with dismemberment of the State we should have no greater representation. We should not have less than five certainly, but Central Queensland would have only two and a-half and Northern Queensland one and a-half, if it were possible to make a division of that sort.

Mr. LENNON: But we should have better administration, and the mining industry would flourish, and not be like it is now under the present Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If separation had preceded federation it would have been a much easier task.

Mr. LENNON: I agree with you.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I will recall to the minds of hon. members the motion moved in this Chamber by the then Chief Secretary, Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, in 1891. Had that motion been given effect to it would have placed Queensland in a very different position when the Federal union was consummated.

Mr. LENNON: The great financial scheme?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes; it would have had this excellent effect: that Queensland would have escaped the turmoil it has now to endure, because in the referendum which was taken on federation it was the great majority of the North that dropped the South into federation. We did not cry out about the result of that referendum, as hon. members opposite are crying about the result of the recent referendum, but we simply knuckled down.

Mr. LENNON: The last referendum was not properly conducted, and you know it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I hope the last referendum will not be as

unsatisfactory in its result as the former referendum has been. The motion moved by Sir Samuel Griffith in 1891 is as follows:—

That it would be to the advantage of the colony to constitute the Southern, Central, and Northern districts of Queensland as separate and autonomous provinces, with separate legislative and executive authorities, having full powers of legislation and government so far as regards matters of local concern; but so that matters of general concern, including the administration of the public debt, should remain under the control of one legislative and one executive authority for the united provinces, having jurisdiction over the whole of the present colony of Queensland until the establishment of an Australian Federal Government, when such of their functions as may be assigned to the legislative and executive authorities of the Federal Government should pass to those authorities.

Had that resolution been carried into effect the thing would have been simplified, but I think the resolution accounts for the slackening of interest in separation because they saw federation looming in the distance.

Mr. LENNON: The Conservative Press said we would get separation easier under federation. They threw dust into the eyes of the people.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Does the hon. member think that any benefit would accrue to Central Queensland from separation just now.

Mr. LENNON: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Even allowing that the matter rests with the State Parliament, and that a referendum is unnecessary, I say the State Parliament dare not move in the matter yet. There is no public movement behind this proposal, and there is no justification whatever in wasting time discussing the question, because Parliament has not been moved in the matter by any expression of public sentiment.

Mr. FOLEY: We are endeavouring to make it now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A revolutionary change such as this would be should be preceded by a public movement.

Mr. LENNON: It is an unbloody revolution.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Quite so. The best reformations have been such, and I hope that if this proposal is adopted at any time it will not be accompanied by anything of an unpleasant nature. The people are the proper persons to say whether separation is desired. What have the people done in this matter? A meeting was specially convened at Rockhampton to discuss this grave question, and it was attended by less than thirty persons.

Mr. RYAN: When was that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am sorry that circumstances prevented the hon. member for Barcoo going to that meeting, but I can hardly understand how he has been moved to act in this matter upon such slender premises as he has got.

Mr. RYAN: He was returned pledged to separation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And he will be defeated on this motion. I have quoted "Quick and Garran."

Mr. LENNON: Any chance of drawing in Barabbas?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; we will not have Barabbas, but we will

have a relation of his presently. (Laughter.)

[5 p.m.] I wonder how it is that the hon. member who moved this resolution has not relied upon that great panacea of all ills—one of the big planks of their platform. Why did he not move that it be referred to the will of the people?

Mr. RYAN: Because Parliament has the power to do it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: But even though it were not set out in the Constitution, surely he would have no hesitation in trusting a matter of this sort to the people.

Mr. LENNON: To the districts concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is the referendum no longer in the platform of the Labour party?

Mr. MANN: Why don't you give us a referendum on the income tax?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: For the very same reason that the Labour party will not have a referendum on this question, because I am sure the result would not be satisfactory.

Mr. MANN: That is right.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not sweet on referenda at all. The result has not been at all to my taste. (Laughter.) I am surprised that a party which places the referendum as one of the first planks in their platform—

Mr. LENNON: On a proper subject.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Surely this is a proper subject. It appears to me that the plank manufacturers will be very cross with the party if they do not advocate a referendum on this important question.

Mr. LENNON: You propose an amendment and try it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not going to propose an amendment. It appears to me that if the answer to the question set forth by the Labour party be not according to their liking, that it is not a proper subject for a referendum. I would like to know how the hon. member who moved this resolution regards the referendum.

Mr. RYAN: I do not think a referendum has anything to do with this. The Constitution provides for Parliament to do it. That is also the opinion of the Treasurer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will the hon. member read "Quick and Garran," page 977, the closing paragraph. Perhaps the hon. member would like to know his own views on the referendum. I will tell you what the hon. member for Barcoo says about the referendum. On page 979 of *Hansard*, volume civ., the hon. member is reported as follows:—

I take it that that referendum is for some purpose. It was surely intended by the Parliament that passed that Act that, if the referendum is carried in favour of teaching the Bible in State schools, there shall be Bible teaching in State schools; and, therefore, it is desirable that there should be a representative plebiscite or vote on the subject.

Then further on he says—

Although personally I am opposed to religious instruction in State schools, still I do not think we should try to deceive the people who desire to have that religious instruction in the State schools by giving them a referendum that will afterwards not be taken notice of by Parliament, and the Premier himself has thrown out the suggestion to those who are opposed to it. During the recent

Hon. D. F. Denham.]

election I stated, in answer to a question, that if the referendum was carried I should certainly support the carrying of the Bill through the House.

Those are the hon. member's views, and I take it they have not changed now, and if the people say so, it should be so. Surely there can be no objection to a referendum on this great and important question if Parliament so ordered and people so desired it? If the people expressed their appreciation and desire to secure a division of the State, then, of course, Parliament will have to give effect to their desire. I would like to call attention to the distribution of the population of the State.

Mr. LENNON: Compared with the time Moreton Bay got separation from New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The latest figures I could obtain from the Government Statistician. In North Queensland there are 137,110 persons, which works out at a percentage of 21.98. Central Queensland has 73,440, or 12.69 per cent. of the population of the State, and Southern Queensland has a population of 377,998, or 65.33 per cent. Now I take it that Northern Queensland has just about the population of Brisbane and suburbs within a radius of ten miles—about 137,000. Central Queensland has not much more than half the population of Brisbane within 10 miles. Now, is there any need, when you consider that Central Queensland will not now get the benefit of all its Customs duties as it did formerly, but will merely get 73,440 times £1 5s.—

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: They will get their land revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think they would hesitate very much before they took upon themselves that obligation. But I want to know, if we go in for separation, why not have the complete thing? Certainly the Gulf country is entitled to separation from Central and Northern Queensland.

Mr. HARDACRE: Not a bad idea, either.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That will come in time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I contend that it is not in their interests financially to have separation at the present time.

Mr. RYAN: The paragraph referred to by the hon. gentleman begins with "if."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a very unfair statement to make. The hon. gentleman was not present when I quoted the paragraph.

Mr. RYAN: They have qualified it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I quoted "Quick and Garran" as an authority on the subject.

Mr. RYAN: "Quick and Garran" do not agree with that view. See page 975.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I quoted them correctly. There have been several elections held since we entered the Commonwealth, and at no State general election has the question of separation been raised. Every great political change should have at least the imprimatur of the mandate of the people. Now, I hope the hon. gentleman will be discreet, and retire his resolution from the paper, because, to my mind, I have shown that the reasons which actuated the movement some twenty years ago have long since passed away, that there is now no movement in Northern Queensland, and there has been

[Hon. D. F. Denham.

no mandate from either Northern or Central Queensland. A meeting was convened at Rockhampton, and very lightly attended, and until the people have spoken and urged their requirements, I think this State Parliament should, at any rate, refrain from encouraging a separation of this State.

Mr. GRANT (Rockhampton): I have a few words to say on this question. The matter is absolutely an electioneering dodge. I have always been in favour of separation, but I would like to inform the House about the genesis of this movement. Mr. Higgs, at the last Federal election, thinking—and perhaps not much out—that he was not likely to get many votes at Rockhampton—knowing he would get all the Labour votes, and wanting to get the votes of others who were not Labour men—

Mr. LENNON: Which he did.

Mr. GRANT: No; he got a small number on the separation question, which did not interfere with the Federal election at all. The men who voted for him were men who had corner allotments in Rockhampton, and they knew if they got separation, and Rockhampton was the capital, their corner allotments would be increased in value. And what was the attitude of Mr. Higgs himself when he could, by an effective movement, have carried Queensland into the Federal Parliament as three States? In 1899, Mr. Curtis, the then member for Rockhampton, moved that Queensland should enter into the Federal Parliament as three States—that Queensland would not agree to go under the Federal Constitution unless she went as three States. What was the attitude of Mr. Higgs then? He opposed the thing for all he was worth.

Mr. RYAN: Because he wanted federation.

Mr. GRANT: And the hon. member for Herbert said this afternoon that we could get it from the Federal Parliament. There were three men then sitting in this House who are now members of the Federal Parliament, and what vote did they give? They were among those who voted against the separation of the State in the Federal Parliament. They are Messrs. McDonald, Givens, and Higgs, who, when the opportunity was given them to give Queensland separation into three States, voted solidly against it.

Mr. RYAN: That was only a move against federation.

Mr. GRANT: Mr. Higgs voted against the motion.

Mr. MURPHY: Let us hear what he said.

Mr. GRANT: It is in 1899 *Hansard*, page 238. Members can read it for themselves.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Read it.

Mr. LENNON: We want someone else to speak.

Mr. GRANT: I do not want to take much time. As a contrast to Mr. Higgs moving for separation, we have Mr. Bamford in the Federal Parliament moving a resolution to abolish it altogether. Here we have one Federal member urging that we should have three States in Queensland, and another Federal member moving that we should not have States at all—going away with the State Governments altogether.

Mr. ALLEN: One wants half a dozen, and another wants three; that is the difference.

Mr. GRANT: Contrast the action of Mr. Bamford with that of his colleague, who is bringing this up purely as an electioneering dodge. Mr. Higgs, before he contested Capricornia, was living in Sydney as a Government servant, and doing very handsomely.

Mr. MANN: Shame, shame!

Mr. GRANT: And he asked the electors to return him as a Labour supporter, without any interest in Queensland.

Mr. MURPHY: Your party appointed him.

Mr. GRANT: I think it was a very good-natured thing on the part of my colleague to do so.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: What are you doing it for?

Mr. GRANT: It is curious if one cannot make a few remarks—that is absolutely no aspersion. Mr. Higgs was a Sydney man, living in Sydney.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Queensland.

Mr. GRANT: He was not in Queensland; he had lived in Sydney forty years. He comes up to Queensland to contest Capricornia, without any interest in Queensland. Looking for an effective war-cry, he brings up separation. What interest has he in Queensland? He is now the member for Capricornia, but, as a matter of fact, separation did not influence his election one iota.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: What influenced it?

Mr. GRANT: Well—(Laughter.) I am not the only one who cannot give an explanation. Mr. Higgs after his return comes back to Rockhampton, and tries to get a popular movement behind him in regard to separation.

Mr. RYAN: He has got it.

Mr. ALLEN: He polled a popular vote.

Mr. GRANT: He tried to get a meeting together, compared with which the Rosewood meeting was a large assembly. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Barcoo knows that what I am saying is the truth; he knows as well as I do that it is nothing but pure bathos on his part. I am sure he did not consult them this afternoon in bringing this motion forward, and for a reason for which he has my sincere sympathy, because his speech was purely a lot of short extracts from other men's speeches. I am sure if time had permitted the hon. member could have given a much better explanation of the separation question than he did. I have pointed out that in the Federal Parliament among the Queensland representatives are three men who voted against separation when they could easily have carried it.

Mr. RYAN: It was meant to side-track federation.

Mr. GRANT: The hon. member is simply appealing to the property-owners in Rockhampton. I will probably have him for an opponent in the next election, when the Barcoo and the Mitchell will be so cut up.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh, oh! Caucus secrets!

Mr. BOWMAN: How do you know?

Mr. GRANT: I do not know, but the hon. member is taking time by the forelock to express sympathy with the property-owners of Rockhampton. The question of separation is not as vital now as it once was. The Post Office and the Customs have been taken from us. The Post Office is not nearly so well managed now as it was under the State

Government. That is the experience not only of myself but the experience of other business men. We have got a railway to Rockhampton which brings us into close communication with Brisbane, doing away to a certain extent with some of the grievances that we laboured under.

Mr. RYAN: Are you for or against separation?

Mr. GRANT: I have said already that I was very much in favour of separation. But I want to point out to the House what this really means. It is purely an electioneering business.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Imputing motives.

Mr. GRANT: It just shows how much interest is taken in this question. Why, when the hon. member for Herbert was speaking, there were only twelve members in the House.

Mr. MANN: There was a deputation on outside.

Mr. GRANT: You can make what explanation you like about it, but the fact remains that when the deputy leader of the Opposition was speaking, and while he was giving the early history of the separation movement in Northern Queensland, he had not twelve members in the House to listen to him.

Mr. MANN: Because members were attending a deputation.

Mr. GRANT: And later on, when the Minister for Lands was speaking, the House was in a most hilarious mood, and were simply making jokes the whole time. It just shows that the House has not taken this motion seriously.

Mr. MURPHY: We don't take you seriously. (Laughter.)

Mr. LENNON: Does the hon. member for Rockhampton insinuate that I am not serious in this matter?

Mr. GRANT: No, I do not insinuate that you were not serious. I was pointing out that other members of the House were not serious.

Mr. LENNON: I have spent years of my life over it.

Mr. MURPHY: Do you take it seriously yourself?

Mr. GRANT: I take it seriously. (Laughter.)

Mr. LENNON: It is a serious matter.

Mr. GRANT: I noticed that the hon. member for Barcoo quoted several extracts from speeches made by my colleague, the leader of the Government. So far as I know, my colleague still holds those same views, although we have never discussed the matter. We have had no occasion to discuss the question, as it has never cropped up for the last ten years. There is one man in Rockhampton who worked night and day for the separation movement, and spent years of his life in advocating it, and no man worked harder than he did for it. I refer to Mr. Curtis. He was the most pronounced separatist in Queensland, and he made himself almost obnoxious to members of this House by his persistent advocacy of separation on every conceivable occasion. Yet Mr. Curtis thought so little of Mr. Higgs's separation movement that he did not attend the public meeting called for the purpose of helping it along.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Curtis is a back number.

Mr. LENNON: He does not amount to much, anyhow.

Mr. RYAN: Do you say that Mr. Curtis does not support Mr. Higgs?

Mr. Grant.]

Mr. GRANT: I say that he did not attend the public meeting called in Rockhampton.

Mr. RYAN: Well, he is with him.

Mr. GRANT: I am very glad to find that the hon. member for Barcoo is now finding support in Mr. Curtis. (Government laughter.)

Mr. LENNON: It shows that you cannot gauge public feeling in your own electorate.

Mr. GRANT: I can always gauge it at election time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GRANT: I do not think this is a serious discussion at all. It is purely fireworks on the part of the hon. member for Barcoo and one or two other members who have spoken. How many electors in Blackall and Barcaldine care a snap of the fingers about separation? Did the hon. member ever discuss it with them during the last election?

The TREASURER: Not much.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: He knew better.

Mr. GRANT: He did not care a snap of the fingers about separation then. In fact, Western Queensland never did care about separation. It was purely a coastal matter.

Mr. LENNON: Did you discuss the Bible referendum at the last election?

Mr. GRANT: I remember that on one occasion a deputation went from Rockhampton to Clermont in connection with the separation movement. It included Mr. Murray, Mr. Curtis, and another gentleman, and they could not get a hearing at Clermont. The electors in Western Queensland have never taken the matter seriously.

Mr. KEOGH: It was just the same as the separation from New South Wales. I remember it well.

Mr. GRANT: We in Rockhampton have always been in favour of separation—purely, I suppose, from a selfish point of view, that we think that Rockhampton would be a better and a bigger town if it were made the capital of a new State; so why should I, as a member for Rockhampton, oppose such a worthy scheme? With these few observations I will not say any more.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*): Some hints have been thrown out that this is a party question.

Mr. GRANT: I explained why I said that.

Mr. BOWMAN: I want to say distinctly that it is not a party question.

The TREASURER: That hint was not thrown out from this side.

Mr. BOWMAN: The senior member for Rockhampton threw it out.

Mr. GRANT: I explained why I said that.

Mr. NEVITT: You said it was an electioneering dodge.

Mr. LENNON: And also that it was a party question.

Mr. BOWMAN: As regards the motion introduced by the hon. member for Barcoo for the separation of Northern and Central Queensland, I do not agree with it. I do not say that because I do not desire to see the Central and Northern portions of this State get a fair deal. No hon. member can question any vote of mine in connection with any new expenditure in Central or Northern Queensland, as I always voted in favour of that expenditure, except in the case of one railway—the Port Alma Railway—and in the case of a private railway, and I would always

[*Mr. Grant.*

cast a vote against those railways. In considering the interests of Queensland, I always regard the Central and Northern divisions of the State as being of paramount importance with the electorate I represent myself. After listening to the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Barcoo and the deputy leader of the Labour party, Mr. Lennon, I do not think that any argument has been put forward to show this House that there is any urgent necessity for dividing up this State into three separate States.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYAN: We will lose our members with this redistribution of seats.

Mr. BOWMAN: We do not know how the redistribution of seats is going to be settled. (Hear, hear!) I hope that the redistribution of seats will be settled on equitable lines by an independent commission that will give a fair deal to every member of this House.

Mr. WHITE: Give a fair deal to the public.

Mr. BOWMAN: I think that at the present time, when we have a population of barely 600,000 people in this State, it is utterly absurd to talk about dividing it up into three States. (Hear, hear!) But I have no hesitation in saying that as population increases in Queensland there should be a necessity for dividing such a large territory as we have. I remind my honourable colleagues who have taken up this question to-day that a great deal of thanks is due to the Centre and North for the splendid vote they gave in favour of federation, making it possible for Queensland to enter the federation with the other Australian States.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: That was because they could not get separation.

Mr. BOWMAN: I will always be a federationist before a separationist. I was an anti-Billite, but I recognise that the legislation that we have got at the hands of the Commonwealth Parliament is such that I consider we did a wise thing, and the majority of the people did a wise thing, in enabling Queensland to enter the federation.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: Therefore, I shall always support the Australian Parliament, and I shall always adopt a national spirit as against a separation spirit, such as is proposed this afternoon.

Mr. KEOGH: You won't go in for unification?

Mr. BOWMAN: I have never been a unificationist, and I never advocated unification at all.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: The other side do it for you.

Mr. BOWMAN: I was amused at the acting leader of the Government to-day when he stood up to speak on this resolution, and said that it was simply one of fireworks; but it took the hon. gentleman forty minutes to reply to the fireworks. He seemed to get quite enthusiastic, and I suppose he put the case for the Government as strongly as he possibly could. If the matter was of so small importance as the hon. gentleman designated it, then I do not think it was necessary to waste quite so much time as the hon. gentleman did over it. I recognise that there has been a feeling that something requires to be done for the North and Centre. The senior member for Townsville, in speaking on the Address in Reply, pointed this out, and suggested that a good deal of the work now

done in Brisbane should be done in Townsville and Rockhampton, and he suggested that departments should be established in those places, instead of having so much centralisation in Brisbane. He instanced particularly the Lands Department, which he suggested should have a sub-department in Townsville. I am at one with the hon. gentleman in that. I think that anything we can do in the matter of facilitating the business of the country, and giving better facilities to those residing in remote parts of the State, it should be done. Taking the Centre and North, the principal towns there are Rockhampton and Townsville, and I would be only too pleased to support any proposal which came before the House that would give better facilities to those places than they have at the present time.

The TREASURER: We are willing to do that.

Mr. BOWMAN: But it has not been done, and probably that is one of the reasons that has caused some hon. members on this side of the House to speak as warmly as they have done to-day on this separation question.

Mr. RYAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not think that the interests of the State should be centred in the city alone. Those of us who have travelled up North—and there are many members in this party who have travelled far more than I have—have recognised that there are great possibilities in this State; for those two divisions have asked to be classified as separate States, particularly North Queensland. We in Brisbane to-day are benefiting entirely by the outside districts, but I do not agree that at the present time there is a necessity for the division of Queensland into three States.

Mr. RYAN: Do you favour decentralisation?

Mr. BOWMAN: I would favour giving facilities by which both Centre and North would get greater advantages than they get at present—so that they could deal direct with those centres as against coming to Brisbane and waiting and having their progress retarded. I have heard Northern members who formerly occupied seats in this House, notably Mr. McDonald, member for Flinders, now Speaker in the Commonwealth Parliament, also Senators Givens and Stewart, who all fought for federation because they believed the Federal Parliament was the one means by which they could get satisfaction as regards the black labour question that had agitated Queensland for many years; and I am more than satisfied that one of the best things done in the history of the Commonwealth was the establishment of a white Australia. Therefore I would do everything in my power to strengthen rather than weaken the Federal bond. Federation is very warmly supported by many men who were antagonistic to the black labour policy. Further, we have had an experience in Australia in connection with wages boards and the Industrial Disputes Bill of New South Wales.

[5.30 p.m.] We had an experience during the last year and the early part of this year that makes many of us have a greater faith in Commonwealth industrial legislation than in State industrial legislation in the form of the present wages boards. I am not going to detain the House at greater length. I will simply say that though I am opposed to the motion, it is not from any spirit of being unwilling to render assistance to any hon. mem-

ber who may represent either a Central or a Northern district, because, after all, what we want to see is the progress of Queensland as a whole, and not any particular section.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (*Kennedy*): I did not wish to take part in this debate, but the tone of the Secretary for Lands was enough to make anyone get up and say something. I take it that it is to the best interests of Australia, not only of Queensland, to divide this vast territory into three or four separate States, in order that it may be better developed; and that is why I support this motion. When I was in the Central district from 1895 to 1900 I could not enthuse on the subject of separation. The probabilities are that I did not know as much then as I know now; and the Central district has not got such great resources as the North. But when I went to the North and saw the great resources to be developed I came to the conclusion that it would be in the best interests of Queensland to have separation. The Minister for Lands told us that things have changed since twenty-five years ago. They have changed very much for the better, thanks to the Federal Parliament; but there are other things to be taken into consideration. There is a great power rising in the East; and if we can develop the Northern part of Australia by placing two or three persons where there is only one to-day, we shall be doing a great benefit to Australia. If we want anything done in railway development in the North, is there any possibility of getting it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are there not railways constructed and being constructed in the North?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Only to-day I got communications from the North which prove conclusively to me the uninterested attitude of the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Mines. They really want to give away our goldfield areas in 10-mile blocks.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is inaccurate. Where is it? What district?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: In the Kennedy Goldfield.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would like to know which goldfield.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Somebody in your office has something to do with this. It shows the utter disregard they have for conditions prevailing in the North. In my electorate there are large runs right along the Northern Railway; and though the Minister for Lands prided himself the other night on the fact that the Government are cutting up estates and settling people on the land, there is scarcely one person there who knows there are runs along that railway to be resumed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: In my electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Give me the name of the district.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: In my electorate—the whole of the electorate is the same. I say that if the interests of the North were considered, and the people knew that such lands as these were available for grazing homesteads, the North would go ahead by leaps and bounds.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Have you ever been in the Lands Office?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I have, several times. The hon. gentleman made a great point of

Mr. O'Sullivan.]

the diminished influence we would exercise in the Commonwealth Parliament if we were to cut ourselves up into three States; but three States would wield a greater influence than one State, so that argument falls to the ground, in my opinion. I do not say we would claim six senators if we did get separation, but we could not have less than three each, or nine for the three States, so that we would be bound to get more than the six we already have in the Senate. There is one thing that I would be very sorry for, but we cannot help that—that, if Central and Northern Queensland go away from the South, the poor benighted torism of this part of Queensland will sink you into perdition. But I see a silver lining in this way: That the people would be roused out their conservatism when we democrats had left them, and would sweep the present Government out of power. I could not enthuse in this movement between 1895 and 1900, and I quite agree with the hon. member for Rockhampton that they could not get the Western people to enthuse over separation. I believe that there was a lot of "corner allotment" in the agitation in the Central district at that time. My friends and I often spoke about it, and we would have nothing to do with it. But it is quite a different matter to-day. We have to develop the North. We have proven to the world that the Northern part of Australia is a white man's country, which practically twenty-five years ago was not believed even by the residents of Brisbane. Therefore, as things have changed so favourably, we should undoubtedly get this separation into three States, and do it as quickly as we possibly can in the interests of Australia. I do not want to dwell any further on the question, and, as I would like to see it come to a vote, I shall resume my seat.

Mr. FOLEY (*Townsville*): I have been waiting for some time expecting that my colleague, the senior member for Townsville, would take a hand in this discussion.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FOLEY: Seeing that at one time in Townsville we used to look on him as the prophet of separation, I am rather surprised that he does not think it worth while to take any part in the discussion.

Hon. R. PHILP: I want to hear what you have to say.

Mr. FOLEY: I must admit that I have no mandate from the electors of Townsville on this question.

Hon. R. PHILP: It is as dead as a door-nail in Townsville.

Mr. FOLEY: I do not know so very much about that. It is being resuscitated, and perhaps from a different standpoint.

Hon. R. PHILP: By whom?

Mr. FOLEY: From a different standpoint from what it used to be in the old days. I suppose I remember as well as a good many the agitation that took place throughout the North on the separation question. Although not a very enthusiastic supporter of the movement then, I recognised that the great reason for the agitation was the scurrilous way in which the Southern Governments dealt with the people of the North and Centre. In those days, as the Secretary for Lands pointed out, the people of the North were entitled to the Customs revenue collected in their ports, and they used to claim that, by the large amount of revenue that was received in the South from

[*Mr. O'Sullivan.*

the North, they assisted to build up Brisbane to the detriment of the North. They claimed that they were entitled to a better share in the revenue to be spent in the North, but they could never get it from the Southern Governments. The Secretary for Public Lands pointed out that that reason has been removed, and that the revenue is now collected by the Federal Government, and does not belong to Queensland at all. Yet the same arguments prevail now that prevailed then. The North still suffers injustice at the hands of the Southern Government. It is well known—and I advocated it last session—that Townsville has been fighting for a railway station for the last fifteen or sixteen years, and she has not got it yet, although it appears to be on the cards now that we are about to get a building suitable to our requirements.

Mr. KEOGH: You have had nearly £1,000,000 spent in your harbour.

Mr. FOLEY: One of the grievances the North is suffering from is that the Southern Government will not allow the North or the Centre to go away, because they have been such good milch cows—as has been stated in this House many times before. Of course, these *Hansards* are full of speeches made by members many years ago on the subject, and the question is so well known to most hon. members that it is scarcely worth while going over the same ground again; but there is certainly a feeling among the workers of the North that if Queensland were divided into three States they would be better able to manage their own affairs than having them managed from one end of this big State. The reasons that actuated the people in days gone by are not the reasons that are actuating them to-day. We know that the principal reason for advocating separation in the old days was that people in power in the North saw that by getting separation they would be able to dominate the North, and thus command an unlimited supply of cheap labour to carry on the sugar industry.

Hon. R. PHILP: That is untrue.

Mr. FOLEY: It is a fact. I make that statement here and assert that it is true.

Hon. R. PHILP: I say it is untrue.

Mr. FOLEY: That is why the senior member for Townsville became such a strong advocate of separation, and that is why he was returned to this House. He was supported in Townsville for years for the purpose of advocating it, and it was only when the Southern Government became frightened of the hon. member that they found him a place in the Government in order to keep his mouth shut and stop his advocacy of separation.

Hon. R. PHILP: That is quite untrue.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must accept the denial made across the floor of the House by the senior member for Townsville. I hope the hon. member will not persist in his statement.

Mr. FOLEY: I am sorry if I have transgressed the rules, but I was only making a statement which has been made before in this House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The senior member for Townsville interjected that the hon. member's statement was not true, and the hon. member persists in his statement. He must accept the denial of the senior member for Townsville.

Mr. FOLEY: I accept the hon. member's denial, but at the same time I would like to

quote from a speech that was made in 1893 by the present Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, the Hon. Andrew Fisher, in this House. He said—

It has been pointed out that, whenever any concessions were likely to be got, the Government of the day "nobbled" the leaders of the separation party, thereby preventing their schemes from bearing fruit.

I make the same statement here. I say that the McIlwraith Government nobbled Mr. Philp and made him a Minister in order to keep his mouth closed on the separation question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Hon. R. PHILP: I say that is a deliberate untruth.

Mr. FOLEY: I would also like to ask the hon. member if it is not a fact that he promised that, in the event of his being made a Minister in the McIlwraith Government, he would go back for re-election, and I would like to ask him whether he did go back for re-election?

Hon. R. PHILP: Yes; half a dozen times.

Mr. FOLEY: As a Minister?

Hon. R. PHILP: Yes.

Mr. KEOGH: He is the best Minister we ever had.

Mr. FOLEY: I am not denying that for a moment. I am only saying that his advocacy of separation in those days and his advocacy of it now are quite different things. I hope that the motion will go to a vote, and that it will be carried by this House.

The TREASURER (Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, *Enoggera*): I have listened to hon. members who have spoken on the other side, and I must say that I have not been able to gather from any of their speeches any good reason why this separation motion has been brought forward. The hon. member has quoted "Quick and Garran" on the question as to what is required in regard to the formation of new States. I should like to point out to him that at page 975 of Quick and Garran's "Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth," writing on section 123, they say—

The limits of a State are clearly diminished when its Parliament consents to a new State being formed by the separation of territory from the State.

I would ask the hon. member if we cut up Queensland into three States, how can he contend that the limits of Queensland are not altered? If the limits of Queensland are altered, as they must be if the State is cut up into three States, then section 123 must come in, and, in addition to obtaining the sanction of Parliament to the proposed division, we must have the consent of the people of Queensland. But, apart from that aspect of the question, I do not think it is the business of this House to in any way bind Queensland in a matter of this kind without having some sort of a mandate from the people. The people have not spoken at all on the matter.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Mr. Higgs has spoken.

The TREASURER: When we come to look at Mr. Higgs's record on this question, what weight can we attach to his advocacy of separation? When Mr. Curtis brought forward his amendment in this House in 1899 with a view to providing that Queensland should enter federation as three States, Mr. Higgs spoke very strongly against the amendment and voted against it.

Mr. LENNON: That amendment would have blocked federation.

The TREASURER: Mr. Higgs was then member for a Brisbane electorate. After that he was a senator representing Queensland in the Federal Parliament for six years, and during all that time he did not on any occasion say a single word in favour of separation. But now, because he thinks he may get a little popularity or gain a few votes in the Central district as member for Capricornia, he brings forward a motion in favour of separation. The hon. member for Barcoo, who is also a member for that portion of the State, brings a similar motion before this House.

Mr. RYAN: Because it is in accordance with the general feeling in the Central district.

The TREASURER: If the hon. member for Barcoo and Mr. Higgs represent general feeling, then it is the general feeling, but if general feeling is the expression of the opinion of the people, then I say it is absolutely false to assert that there is a general feeling in favour of separation. No attempt has been made this afternoon to prove that there is any general desire on the part of the people for separation. The meeting called by Mr. Higgs at Rockhampton was an absolute farce. There were only twenty or thirty people present, and not one of them was, as far as I can gather, an old advocate of separation.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was called to form a committee.

The TREASURER: It was a public meeting. We all know that for forty years separation was advocated in Rockhampton and Townsville unceasingly, but that directly federation was accomplished it was recognised that the possibility of getting separation was absolutely gone, and all the people in the Central and Northern districts who had advocated separation dropped their advocacy. It would be absolutely wrong for this House to carry such a motion as that now under discussion without first submitting the question to the people.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Then take a referendum.

The TREASURER: It has been clearly shown that the North and Centre have only 200,000 people as against 377,000 in the South. Would it be a right thing under those circumstances to ask for a referendum to be taken on the question?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Let us have a referendum in the Centre and the North.

The TREASURER: If you want a referendum, it must be a referendum of the whole State. Nothing has been said this afternoon to show that the North and Centre are at any disadvantage as compared with Brisbane. Both those parts of the State get a fair share of what is going, and the complaints they made in the old days as to the money collected in those districts being spent in the South have now no foundation. The Customs duties are no longer collected by the State Government. The great question which concerned the North, and which was agitated so strongly in the early days, was the question of black labour. That is absolutely settled, and there is no chance of its being revived. The whole of Australia is against black labour.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You are not responsible for that.

The TREASURER: The Labour party are not responsible for that; it was the Barton Government who brought in the policy of a white Australia.

Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.]

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: At whose dictation?

The TREASURER: At whose dictation! There is absolutely no reason under present circumstances why separation should be brought about. The people residing in the Centre and North are not anxious for separation. They have not been asked to express an opinion on the subject. Mr. Higgs raised the question at a meeting at Rockhampton, and now the hon. member for Barcoo, not to be outdone in the matter, is trying to get a catch vote in this House on the subject. I look upon the whole movement as a sham. It is a movement which has been got up by Mr. Higgs.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Then why do you take it so seriously?

The TREASURER: Because I do not think it should be supported in any way. It is for hon. members opposite to show that there is some agitation for separation before asking this House to deal with the question, and I challenge the hon. member for Barcoo to show me a single instance where separation has been advocated by the people. Everything possible is done to secure expeditious and satisfactory administration in the different parts of the State. We have Supreme Courts, Districts Courts, and real property offices in the Centre and the North.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And you saddled the Central district with the Port Alma Railway against the wishes of the people.

The TREASURER: Now that the Port Alma Railway has been decided on, the people of Rockhampton and district are very well satisfied with the project, and we hear nothing about it. It was only until the question was settled that there was any agitation on the subject. There were two parties in Rockhampton who were divided in opinion as to whether Port Alma or Broadmount should be the port for the district, but now that the railway has been decided on there appears to be perfect satisfaction.

At 7 o'clock the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government Business.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

* Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*), who was received with Opposition "Hear, hears," said: The Address in Reply has been somewhat protracted, and has grown at times, if I might say so, rather lifeless. It is not my intention to engage the attention of hon. members at any length, and in my brief remarks I shall endeavour to avoid reiteration as much as possible, always allowing for the fact that speeches have fallen from some hon. members in this Chamber during my absence, and if I offend in repetition, it will be on that account. Regarding the Governor's Speech itself, I must characterise it as being rather broad, vague, elastic, and indefinite.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: In that there are several measures mentioned in that Speech which I believe will find no place on the statute-book this session, or any other session, while the present Government is in power. Further, because I believe that there are many measures not mentioned in this Governor's

[*Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn.*

Speech which will be part of the Government programme before this session is out. I think I voice the sentiments of every member on this side of the House when I express satisfaction at the result of our strenuous fight of last session. I refer to the announcement that the Government has at last decided upon an all-round increase in the pay of the railway workers. Even men engaged on construction works are to participate, as we see the announcement that it is the intention of the Government to pay a minimum rate of 8s. per day on construction works in the South, and a minimum rate of 9s. a day in North Queensland. It will be within the recollection of hon. members that when members on this side tried very hard last session to have inserted in the railway proposals brought forward a provision that the minimum wage in the South should be 8s. per day on railway construction works the Government and its supporters at that time looked upon the proposal as a thing accursed—would not receive it at any price. You yourself, Sir, in your then capacity of Chairman of Committees, ruled out of order the subsequent raisings of this question, on the plea that it had been dealt with in a prior amendment, regardless of the fact that in each subsequent raising of the question the particular amendment had regard to a distinct railway proposal. Hon. members opposite to a man, with one exception, I believe, voted down this proposal most consistently last session. The one exception I refer to was the senior member for Maryborough, who thereby incurred the wrath of the Premier, and it did not even need the crack of the party whip to bring that hon. member to his bearings. I am told that that hon. member had visions of what was likely to happen, and it was not necessary for the "Whip," or the self-constituted "assistant Whip," of last session to crack the whip over the hon. member. He quickly fell into line and supported the renunciation of our proposals, regardless of the fact that on two occasions he voted with members on this side. In spite of all this, we have had the spectacle, during this debate, of hon. members on the other side of the House getting up one after another and professing to see merit in the action of the Government in this connection; and the other night the hon. member for Cunningham had the colossal effrontery—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. FERRICKS: To stand up and express his pleasure at the action of the Government in raising the rate of wages to the men engaged on railway construction. To us on this side it was a bit difficult to understand the wherefore of this sudden somersault, and I think it was a pertinent interjection on the part of the senior member for Ipswich who gave us the information. It was this: That at the present time there is a railway being constructed in the hon. member for Cunningham's electorate. That makes all the difference. Twenty-five and thirty years ago, in what was, in the eyes of our friends opposite, "the good old days," these sudden renunciations generally went down. It was quite the thing for politicians one day to get up and swear one colour was white, and then get up the next day and swear that same colour was black. But that does not go down now-a-days, and when the people see a sudden change of opinion, due to very apparent circumstances, as in the case of the hon. member for Cunningham, they only smile, and then inquire as to the approximate date of the

next election, so that they might express their disapproval of this sort of thing by an emphatic stroke of the pencil. It will also be recollected that last year in motions moved, if I remember rightly, by the hon. member for Woothakata and the hon. member for Croydon, it was sought to have inserted in the railway proposals a provision for the payment of a minimum wage of 9s. on railway construction works in North Queensland, and the collective supporters of the Government again jumped upon that proposal. They shielded their actions under the defence, or what I might call the defiance of this party, that the Government would undertake to pay the ruling rate of wages existing in any locality where railway construction was being carried out. I need only specify the case of the Herberton Railway to prove to this House and the country that the Government did not keep their undertaking in that respect. In the Herberton district the ruling rate was 9s. per day, and this liberal, progressive, and democratic Government opposite absolutely refused to pay that rate of wage. They said plainly, in effect, at any rate, that they had opened their hearts when they raised the pay of those men from 8s. to 8s. 6d. per day. The hon. member for Woothakata was most insistent in his representations to the Minister and to the Commissioner; he had interview after interview, and organised deputation after deputation in common with other members from this side of the House, but there was no relenting on the part of the Government, and when things were brought to a crisis, and the men rightly threw down their tools in protest, this alleged democratic Government opposite adopted a "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude. They said, by their action, "We will starve these workers into submission, and at the same time we will aim a deadly blow at the system of railway construction by day labour." They collected the tools, they hung up this railway construction work in defiance of the protests of the men, in defiance of protests from members on this side of the House, in defiance of the protests of the people of the Herberton district—the people directly concerned—and in defiance of the general wish of the people of North Queensland. That was only three months ago. When we see announced the intention of the Government to pay consideration to the pay and accommodation of lengthsmen on the railway, and to consider the case of the overworked and underpaid railway porters, it will be very apparent and well remembered that last session this Government opposite had no time for that. Their chief concern was the tacking of an extra £5 per week on to the salary of the Railway Commissioner, making the total remuneration of that mighty person something in the vicinity of £46 or £47 a week. Again we see announced that this Government intends to pay regard to the lower-paid branches of the public service all round, and we know from our experience last session that the Government's only concern in this connection was tacking £100 a year on to each of the Under Secretaries, under the plea that they were bringing them into uniform line, and as soon as they achieved that they straightway advanced one of the Under Secretaries £50 in the lead on the ground of seniority, but presumably it was to provide them with the excuse for bringing the others up another £50 this session, if all had gone well. But all did not go well. A comet intervened—I do not refer to Halley's comet—I refer to the Federal thunderbolt, "the Wonderful Wednesday" on 13th April. (Hear, hear!) The sweeping Labour victory on that day has caused this alleged progressive and democratic white Australian Liberal Government opposite

to arise to a sense of their awakening. It has actually forced them to concede the just demands made by this party last session—demands which they then opposed to the last drop of the "guillotine" and the last application of the "gag." They have been made to "eat the leek" by the people of Queensland, and it is a pleasure to us to see them coming forward and granting this concession after 13th April, which they so obstinately and so strenuously opposed only six short months ago. I am very pleased indeed at the awakening of the Government in this connection, because I realise that that awakening will not be without its good effect on this party. All the beneficiaries, under the whole of the circumstances which I have mentioned, will naturally say, and will naturally think if they do not say, that if this Labour victory is going to bring them such prompt and pronounced betterment in their working conditions, they will have some more of it, and I believe that when the present parties in the House go before the electors the people who have been beneficially affected in this instance will say, "Let us have some more of this Labour rule." I venture to say that when that time comes the fusion Government in this State will meet with an equally disastrous annihilation as befel the Federal fusion on 13th April.

Mr. COYNE: Will meet with the same confusion.

Mr. FERRICKS: With the same confusion. As I represent an electorate that is almost wholly farming in its commercial life, I would like, in passing, to make a few remarks touching upon the great agricultural industry, and in particular to the method or treatment which this great and growing industry receives in this Chamber. We know it is the custom for certain gentlemen on the other side of the House to meet at the commencement of every Parliament to consider what steps they shall adopt to—as they call it—conserve the interests of the farmers. Such a meeting was held at the beginning of this Parliament prior to the commencement of last session, and the convener of the meeting—I think it was the hon. junior member for Mackay—did me the honour of extending an invitation to attend the meeting, but I did not attend, for the simple reason that it was, and still is, wholly inexplicable to me how any body of men can honestly and properly represent the farming community or the farming industry while at the same time keeping in power a Government which has, as its chief and only concern, the protection and the welfare of the produce and other rings of the capital city.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: We know the course that these gentlemen adopt in caucus; we have seen it reported in the Press; they pass formal resolutions to the effect that they are out in the interests of the farmers. The daily Press again makes a paragraph of that occurrence, the contents of which is duly telegraphed to the country papers; and the constituents of those electorates, when they see the matter reprinted, naturally think their representatives are on the right track, and so they are while they are in caucus at this preliminary meeting.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Do they have a caucus?

Mr. FERRICKS: They have caucuses.

Mr. MAUGHAN: I am surprised.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Do you go there?

Mr. FERRICKS: No. While they are in caucus their intentions are good, but as soon as they come into this House, these alleged farmers' representatives seat themselves behind a Government which is at the beck and call of the produce merchants of Brisbane and of every ring and

Mr. Ferricks.]

combine in the city. Now, when I speak of produce merchants and produce combines, I refer in no personal sense to any member of this Chamber—I am speaking against the system. We say that these men are not adopting a consistent attitude, for every branch of this great agricultural industry is enthralled and dominated by a ring. It is in the power of a trust which has its headquarters in Brisbane. I need not specify the products in question—we all know them—but in general I mention maize, wheat, butter, potatoes, fruit, and timber. Recently in this city, and I think at the present time, eggs are selling at 2s. per dozen, while hundreds and thousands of dozens were in cold storage in Brisbane, simply because the market had been cornered. The markets in every instance I have quoted are controlled by a horde of middlemen. These middlemen have to be supported by this great agricultural industry, and we know—it is very apparent—how they have the power to control the market. Take maize as an instance: In the time of a prolific crop, the producers of maize send the maize to the city. It is snapped up at bed-rock prices by the produce ring, and eventually the producers see that the market is so gutted that they do not send any more, for a while at least. The produce ring then ladle it out, carefully inflating the market until the market becomes a top notcher. The producers in the country see that the maize is bringing a good price, and they rush big consignments into the city, but before it gets there the market has again gone flop, and our friends, the produce ring, buy up another reserve. The same thing goes on time after time in our very midst, and the same thing applies to every part of this great agricultural industry. Hon. members opposite, who profess to be farmers' representatives, would vote against a proposal, if we had the power to bring it forward, that would put an end to this sort of thing. If we brought forward a proposal for the Government to do for the primary producer here what the South Australian Government does for the primary producer in South Australia, and that is to receive their produce and put it on the market at actual cost price, our friends, these alleged farmers' representatives, would vote against it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The South Australian Government does that for export.

Mr. FERRICKS: We should have the same thing done here for our export trade. And it could also be done for our internal trade, as there is nothing to prevent it, and it would only be an enlargement of the system.

Mr. COYNE: What about the shipping combine?

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes, the shipping combine and the horde of middlemen who hang around them prevent it. Again, still touching on the agricultural industry, our friends opposite are going to support a Redistribution of Seats Bill, and I think I can do nothing better than quote the remarks made by the hon. member for Murilla yesterday. He quoted some figures which I have not had time to go into to endeavour to prove or refute, but I will take his figures as he advanced them in this Chamber. He said that under the proposed Redistribution of Seats Bill the metropolitan electorates would get two more members, and he proposed to treat that as a right thing—as a mere nothing. It is within the remembrance of members in the past that one member has been of very vital importance to Governments and parties in this House. We have had the spectacle of one man saving the Government.

Mr. ALLEN: On more than one occasion.

Mr. FERRICKS: We have heard of the notorious majority of one, and yet our friend,

[Mr. Ferricks.

the hon. member for Murilla, says it is nothing if these produce merchants and combines in Brisbane should get two extra representatives at the expense of the country districts.

Mr. COYNE: To further fleece the farmers.

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes, to further fleece the farmers. I ask hon. gentlemen opposite to be honest about it. If they are going to continue, professedly, as they are, representatives of the farmers, I ask them not to back up the produce merchants and middlemen of Brisbane—these exploiters of the farmers who do not give them back any adequate return. If they do not want to back up these exploiters, then they cannot continue to support and keep in power a Government that is as putty in the hands of these gentlemen.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: It is an old gag thrown at members on this side—it has been thrown more than once during this debate at our party—that we would assist the agricultural industry by putting a land tax on to the farmer.

Mr. ALLEN: They say nothing about the taxes we will take off.

Mr. FERRICKS: Hon. gentlemen opposite are quite cheerful when they throw that across the Chamber. I think I am quite justified in admitting on behalf of this party that if we were in power we would put a land tax on the unimproved land values over £300.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: But while doing that I want these alleged and so-called farmers' representatives on the other side not to forget the fact that we would also put that tax on to the land monopolist, the gentleman who buys land at £1 an acre and sits down and does nothing to produce anything from his land—who smokes the choicest cigars and drinks the best wines, while the Government, the shire councils, town councils, and surrounding settlers are increasing the value of his land up to £15, £20, and even £30 an acre. Then the owner comes on the scene again and picks up £14, £19, or £29 per acre profit to be made on the sale of the land, as the case might be, without doing a hand's turn to bring that increased value about. We contend that our land tax proposals are thoroughly in the interests of general settlement and the *bona fide* user of the land.

Mr. WHITE: He does not believe you.

Mr. FERRICKS: Our friends opposite say that the farmer is already taxed. We quite admit that. He is taxed too much, and it is the aim of our land tax proposals to relieve the farmer of the dozen and one pettifogging taxes which he is at present obliged to pay, which his adjoining landholder, the huge monopolist, goes practically exempt from. There is no need for me to enumerate the dozen and one taxes which the farmer has to pay.

Mr. WHITE: It is no use. You will not get the farmers' vote.

Mr. FERRICKS: I got the farmers' vote long ago, and don't you forget it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: I will take some of the farmers' taxes which are not so often mentioned. Let me quote a case of a farmer who buys land at £5 or £10 an acre. To make the thing plainly illustrative, let me mention a case which has occurred in my own electorate. Some years ago a gentleman bought about 1,280 acres of land within about 2 miles of the Bowen Jetty. It was some of the finest land in the district, and he got it for 2s. 6d. an acre. Since

be bought it, he went home to London and took up a position in the Imperial civil service. He stayed at the Hotel Cecil in London, or some such swagger place, for some time, and suddenly he turned up in Bowen again. He put up a few coils of wire which it was absolutely necessary that he should do, but beyond this he never put a stick of improvements on his property. He sold the 1,280 acres at an all-round price of £5 an acre. It was the Government and the people who enhanced the value of that land. The deepening of the Bowen Harbour and the building of railways by the Government, the making of roads by the shire and town councils and the settlement by the surrounding farmers, who cleared their land and proved its productiveness, which all tended to enhance the value of this man's land. This 1,280 acres of land was bought by a middleman, one of the gentlemen who receives support from the alleged farmers' representatives on the other side. This man cut up the land into 40 and 60 acre blocks and sold it at £10, £12, and £15 an acre.

Mr. MAUGHAN: That is the sort of tax for you.

Mr. FERRICKS: Is it not a reasonable contention to advance that if the land had been placed on the market by the operation of a land tax, that elderly gentleman who owned it, instead of staying so many years in England, would have been glad to have got rid of it at £2 an acre?

Mr. BRIDGES: How did he get so much land at 2s. 6d. an acre?

Mr. FERRICKS: They could do anything in those days. At any rate, that land is sold now at £15 an acre.

Mr. CORSER: When did this man get possession?

Mr. FERRICKS: I was not there at that time, but that does not affect the argument at all. It is reasonable to assume that if a land tax had been put on that land then it would have been sold at £2 an acre instead of as it is now sold for £15 an acre. It is a system that has no right to continue, and it is the purpose of this party to prevent it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: By a land tax.

Mr. FERRICKS: By a land tax. The difference between what the settlers would have had to give for it and an average price of £10 an acre is £8 an acre, which the [7.30 p.m.] purchasers of these blocks have literally thrown into the fire. Suppose instead of that they had thrown it into the Government Savings Bank at 3 per cent., there is a loss of about 4s. 6d. approximately for every acre of land they purchase. A land tax of 4s. 6d. per acre they pay not for ten or thirty or one hundred years, but as long as capital has interest-bearing powers. Our friends opposite have nothing to say about that land tax. Again, they support another tax which never gets much prominence. In my district every case of fruit we export, every ton of pumpkins that comes here, has to be purchased from the producer at a sufficiently low price, and sold to the consumer at a sufficiently high price, to enable the retailer to pay £4, £5, £6, or £7 a week rent, as the case may be. It has to be purchased so low and sold so high as to provide for a horde of middlemen, but we never hear anything about that land tax. And there are a dozen others I could mention if time would permit. We say that the people who delude themselves into the belief that they are representing the farmers are not playing the game with the farmers. They should explain these phases of the question to them, and get an expression of opinion in the agricultural districts.

1910—R

Mr. CORSER: That occurred before this party came into existence.

Mr. FERRICKS: It is occurring every day, and the party opposite are supporting it. The other day in the Press we read that a deputation was introduced by the hon. member for Wide Bay to the Treasurer asking for a special grant of some few thousand pounds for the purpose of building roads and bridges in a new shire in the Wide Bay electorate; and the hon. member was told that there was no money in the Treasury for that purpose. Did he ask himself the reason? I venture to say that if the large unused estates in the Wide Bay State electorate and throughout the country were paying into the Treasury a portion of the publicly created value put on their land by public works and local government improvements and the clearing and cultivation done by selectors—if that were done there would then be money in the Treasury for endowing new shires. I contend—and I defy contradiction or refutation—that it is impossible for new shire councils to be put on a firm business footing entirely from the revenue derived from a few scattered selections; and where they are operating in blacksoil country they should be endowed at their inception. The hon. member for Wide Bay was told there was no money in the Treasury for the purpose. If the hon. member had given the matter half an hour's consideration, instead of drawing wildly exaggerated pictures of the imaginary evils that would follow the imposition of a land tax by the Federal Government he would have come to the conclusion that the present state of things is owing to the fact that we have not got a land tax in operation. Hon. members who—I will not say they represent farming constituencies, because they do not—hon. members sent here by farming constituencies, if they have any case at all, should invite members of this party to meet their constituents and have an exchange of opinions on the question of land-value taxation. If they will do that there will be no harm done. If we get the opportunity of placing our proposals before the people, we are satisfied that the people will do the rest. If those hon. members do not give us the invitation, I venture to prophesy that we shall have to go without invitations.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Expenses paid?

Mr. FERRICKS: We will pay our own expenses in furtherance of the cause we believe in. We say that the least hon. members sent here by farming constituencies should do is to come along to our meetings in their constituencies and let us thrash the question out. If they will not do that, their case cannot stand argument; and if it cannot stand argument it is no case at all. There is one other matter I want to refer to, and that is the much-belauded prosperity of Queensland. We are told about it in the Speech, and we have heard about it from every member who has spoken on the other side. On one or two occasions I interjected that the fact that white men were working for 4d. an hour in the North was not a sign of overwhelming prosperity. That assertion of mine was contradicted by the senior member for Townsville, who said in an undertone, "It is not true." The hon. member for Moreton contented himself with saying, "If it is true, there is something wrong."

Hon. R. PHILP: Something wrong with the men.

Mr. FERRICKS: I contend that the system which the hon. gentleman backs up forces them to do it. I made that assertion, and I repeat the assertion now. In my district, the Burdekin

Mr. Ferricks.]

district, we have adults working seventy-two hours a week for £1 5s., which pans out at 4 and 1-6th of a penny per hour. Further than that, we have young men from eighteen to twenty years of age—men who are allegedly youths, but who are as good men, physically, as ever they will be—getting 18s. for seventy-two hours' work per week. We have young men, eighteen and nineteen years of age, offered 15s. a week of seventy-two hours. There are two young men I know particularly—one named Girvan and the other Crowdy. These young fellows I have known since boyhood. I saw them grow up in Ravenswood, and they are as good men now, physically, as ever they will be. In these privately-owned sugar-mills they were offered the princely wage of 15s. per week of seventy-two hours.

Mr. CORSER: I suppose they got their rations.

Mr. FERRICKS: They got rations. As stated by the hon. member for Burke the other night, the cost of rations at the Proserpine Central Mill works out at about 11s. 6d. per week. I have dined at that Proserpine Mill, and I have also seen the fare at these privately-owned mills on the Burdekin, and I say without fear of contradiction that, if the food at the Proserpine Central Mill is worth 11s. 6d. a week, then the food at these other mills does not cost 7s. or 8s. per week. But we will be liberal. We will say that it costs 9s. per week. That will be 1½d. per hour to add to the pay of the men. That is to say, they are working for 5½d. per hour, exclusive of their keep. That would pan out at 3s. 8d. per day of eight hours, and £1 2s. per week without keep. I am talking now of a week of forty-eight hours. It is known that Mr. Tom Mann recently made some comments in London about the state of workers in the sugar-mills in Queensland, and his remarks were received with a howl of derision and laughter by the Tory fusion Press. As a matter of fact, Mr. Mann has actually understated the lamentable state of affairs which exists in the sugar-mills of Queensland to-day.

Mr. CORSER: In one district.

Mr. FERRICKS: He said that mechanics receive 1s. 3d. per hour for their work. Now, we have mechanics—certificated engine-drivers—in the Burdekin district who work seventy-two hours per week for £1 15s., which pans out, I believe, at about 6d. per hour, or something like that.

Mr. CORSER: Is he a cripple?

Mr. FERRICKS: Certificated engine-drivers, and some of them married men.

Mr. CORSER: Why do they take it when they can get better wages elsewhere?

Mr. FERRICKS: Unfortunately, the Government are flooding the country with immigrants to compete with them, and they have to take whatever is offered. The hon. member for Maryborough interjected just now that this was only happening in one district. It is in a district that I am personally acquainted with, and I make these assertions as my own assertions; but, just to ascertain whether it was applicable to that district only, I have taken the trouble to seek for information. When I interjected on this subject the other night, the hon. member for Musgrave said that men who were working for 3d. or 4d. an hour were paid all they were worth, and he has repeated the remark to-night. On the receipt of that information from the hon. member, I took the trouble to communicate with Mr. Harry Hall, secretary to the Australian Sugar Workers' Union in Bundaberg, asking him how the sugar-workers were treated in the Bundaberg district

[Mr. Ferricks.

generally, and particularly in the electorate of Musgrave, and Mr. Hall writes me in this strain—

The hours of labour and the wages paid in the privately-owned sugar-mills in this (Musgrave) district are a disgrace to any civilised country. The food supplied in most cases is very rough and improperly cooked—not because we have no good cooks, but because they will not pay a good cook a decent wage. The men only get butter in four mills in this district, and at Bingera, Bonna, Pemberton, Miora, and Waterloo the men get no butter. Mr. John White, member for Musgrave, owns the greatest share in Waterloo Mill, and the food there is the worst in the district, and the wages are on a par with the food. At Waterloo there are kanakas on the carrier doing work that white men would be only too pleased to accept. At Bingera, owned by the Hon. Angus Gibson—

Hon. R. PHILP: A good man, too.

Mr. FERRICKS:

the hours are eleven on day shift and thirteen on night shift, and the pay is £1 5s. per week, and even less.

Will the hon. member say he is a good man and that that is good pay?

Hon. R. PHILP: That is the rate fixed by Mr. Fisher, isn't it?

Mr. THEODORE: Mr. Fisher has never fixed a minimum.

Mr. FERRICKS: Mr. Hall continues—

Some men's wages pan out at 3½d. per hour, and some are even lower than that. The same state of things prevails at Fairymead.

With regard to Government central mills, while I advocate them in preference to privately-owned mills, I do not hold them up as a workers' paradise—very far from it.

The TREASURER: You recognise that they only work ninety-six hours a fortnight?

Mr. FERRICKS: They work twelve hours a day.

The TREASURER: They work ninety-six hours a fortnight. Those are the hours fixed by regulation.

Mr. BARBER: They work more than that at many of them.

The TREASURER: They are paid for overtime.

Mr. FERRICKS: I sincerely trust the day is not far distant when the Government central mill growers and sugar-workers will receive a further share of their industry, when the refining monopoly on top has its claws clipped and some of its £1,000,000 sterling profit per year is distributed amongst the producers. I will give the Government central mills this credit—and this is why I advocate their extension in preference to the privately-owned concerns—that the men who are employed there are given at least plain common food, and enough of it; and they are not given that at the privately-owned mills. I have dined at the Proserpine central mill in the men's quarters, and if there should be any doubt about the comparison between the two, let me read the menu of a privately-owned mill: Breakfast, curry and rice; dinner, corned and roast beef; tea, corned and roast beef; brownie, once a week; butter, off from Saturday to Monday. Presumably the men, not working during that time, do not require greasing to slip round—hence the supply of butter is cut off from Saturday to Monday, and brownie is substituted for it. At this mill they have twenty-five Japanese and twenty Chinese employed, and all Chinese cooks. And this progressive, democratic, white-Australian Government tolerates that sort of thing while white men are humping their swags over the country looking for work. In the adjoining mill, Kalamia, there are twenty-five Japanese, one Chinese, one Malay, one

Cingalese, and two not defined. (Laughter.) One reason why I give the Government central mills the preference is because they approach more nearly to treating men as men should be treated. Since we have had Mr. Hindmarsh at the Proserpine Mill the men have had no cause for complaint as regards their treatment and their food. Despite the previous management by various gentlemen who have had long sugary names, the Proserpine Mill has never done anything towards paying its way until the inception of the present management, and under his management the condition of the men has appreciably improved.

The TREASURER: It is the same in all the other mills.

Mr. FERRICKS: I am pleased to hear that. On this matter I will quote Mr. Hall again. He says—

With regard to the food supplies at the central mills in this district we have no fault to find.

But I am sorry to learn from Mr. Hall that the rates of pay in the central mills in Bundaberg are even worse than we have in the North. According to Mr. Hall, at the central mills in the Bundaberg district they employ engine-drivers at 7d. an hour. We pay a bit better in the Proserpine district. We give 10d. an hour. That is not much more, but it is a bit of an improvement. I shall endeavour to show the House why I advocate the extension of the central mill system. I have trenchantly criticised the accommodation and wages at privately-owned mills, in order to show that there is a difference in these respects in favour of the central mills. I hope that that difference will be greatly increased at no distant date. I think the time is not far distant when, if the gentlemen on the Treasury bench who take up such an obstinate position in this matter do not alter their course of action, there will be a party in power who will comply with the wishes of the people in regard to the extension of the central mill system. Last year there were imported into Australia 99,775 tons of raw sugar, practically 100,000 tons—half the sugar consumption of the Commonwealth—and it was valued at £1,124,132. I am prepared to admit that last year there was an exceptional discrepancy between production and consumption. But I shall endeavour to be broader than to take one season for the purposes of my argument. I will take the shortage for the last five seasons, which works out at an average of 30,000 tons of sugar per year. Thirty thousand tons of black-grown sugar imported into this so-called "white Australia" every year during the last five years! We imported 100,000 tons from Java, Fiji, Hongkong, and Mauritius last year, and this happened under this liberal, progressive, democratic white Australia Government through their refusing to extend the present system of central mills.

Mr. CORSER: A good deal of sugar was manufactured and exported in bond.

Mr. FERRICKS: In view of the fact that the consumption of sugar in Australia has doubled during the last fourteen years, I ask hon. members opposite why there is this so-called fear among State fusionists about the insecurity of the industry? I will propound a question to the gentlemen on the Treasury bench, and I will sit down while they reply. I ask them to explain what application to the commercial permanence of the sugar industry the bounty and excise have.

Mr. CORSER: If they take the bounty off and leave the excise, that will make a great deal of difference.

Mr. FERRICKS: What application have the bounty and the excise to the commercial permanence of the industry? There is no answer,

and yet the Treasurer, and his boss the Premier, have during the last two or three years shielded themselves behind the pretence that there is an element of insecurity in connection with the bounty and excise. The only application that those things have to the permanency of the industry is that they are a protection to white-grown cane. I admit that that is a very vital matter, but our friends opposite will not admit that. It is a protection of white-grown sugar as against black-grown sugar, and that is the only application that policy has to the industry, though that, in my opinion and in the opinion of members sitting on this side, is a paramount consideration. But those quasi white Australians on the other side have shielded themselves behind the contention that they import an element of insecurity into the industry. While the import duty of £6 per ton is maintained the sugar industry is absolutely secure, and that duty will obtain so long as the people of Australia have the management of their own affairs, which I hope will be for ever. What is the reason, then, why the Premier has put his back up against advancing money for central sugar-mills? It is because he has been ordered to desist by his friends, the private enterprisers; he has been ordered not to bring the Government into competition with them. That is the reason why he has refused to advance money for the erection of central mills. But the people of Queensland will not tolerate that state of affairs. Hon. members opposite will be forced by their constituents to take some action to prod the Premier from the stand he has taken; and I venture to say that if a vote of the people were taken regarding the extension of the central mill system, the Premier and the people who back him up in the stand he has taken would not last twenty-four hours politically.

The TREASURER: The Prime Minister has admitted, by withdrawing the Bill, that his contention was wrong.

Mr. FERRICKS: Protection to white-grown sugar is the main result of the present policy of bounty and excise. I view with pleasure the prospect there is of a central mill being established on the Johnstone River. For years and years the deputy leader of the Opposition has fought a lone hand fight for the rights of his district and the rights of the country in connection with that matter, and it looks as if his efforts are about to be crowned with success at last. I should like to see a central mill established on the Russell River, and another on the Lower Burdekin. The estimated crop in the Lower Burdekin district for this season is about 160,000 tons, and there is no gainsaying the contention that if we have a central sugar-mill there, nothing short of 250,000 tons of sugarcane would be crushed straight away. The people have the land, and they are prepared to put it under cane. Moneyed men

[8 p.m.] go there looking for land and are prepared to buy the land. It is the ideal sugar country of North Queensland. That point is universally admitted. They have very prolific tonnage and uniform crops. They have no pests, and they do not depend on the seasons, for the system of irrigation they have gone in for is an education in itself. The moneyed men go up there but they do not stay—they do not take up land, because they cannot get any guarantee that their cane will be crushed. Now, is there any inducement for expansion of settlement with that state of affairs prevailing? None whatever. I contend that, while the Government adopts its present obstinate attitude, they are not sincere in their professions about desiring to settle people on the land, because if there is one institution or one work more than another

Mr. Ferricks.]

which conduces to settlement on the land, and settlement of the right kind, then it is the establishment of central sugar-mills. The people of the Burdekin district are urgently in need of more crushing power.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are getting a new 15,000-ton crusher.

Mr. FERRICKS: On the south side of the Burdekin, which will be of no use to the northern side of the river; and let me also tell the Secretary for Agriculture that the gentleman who is going to build this big sugar-mill on the south of the Burdekin is the same gentleman who owns the private mills on the north side—the gentleman who has the monopoly of this splendid sugar district, and the people there do not want to be under the thumb of any man. If they were only in a position to speak their opinions, they would shake off their shackles to-morrow. They want more crushing power, but unless we can bring pressure to bear on the Government then our system of central sugar-mills will not be extended. Owing to the state of affairs prevailing, is it any wonder that hardly any of the Northern representatives are sitting behind the Government? There are only three members out of seventeen. The senior member for Townsville is one, and I venture to say that there is no other man in Queensland who would have held that seat except the hon. member. It was a Labour seat.

Mr. ALLEN: The personal vote.

Mr. FERRICKS: Personal ties of many long years take a long time to sever, but they are wearing—

Hon. R. PHILP: You don't know what you are talking about. I will go to Proserpine next time.

Mr. FERRICKS: The hon. gentleman is very welcome. The other two representatives are the members for Mackay, but they are only there temporarily. (Hear, hear! and Government laughter.) We hope, after the next appeal to the country, there will be no Northern members sitting behind the present Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Don't prophesy until you are sure.

Mr. FERRICKS: I wish to make passing reference to the Redistribution of Seats Bill. I am going to oppose that Bill because I think it is a mean attempt on the part of the Government to rob this side of the House of six or seven members.

Mr. ALLEN: Rob the country.

Mr. FERRICKS: Rob the country and this party of six or seven members. Our friends opposite were crying out for decentralisation at the Federal elections, but now, when it applies to Brisbane, they are whole hog unificationists—they want all the power in Brisbane, and they go the whole hog for unification.

Mr. MANN: A Queen-street Ministry.

Mr. FERRICKS: A Queen-street Ministry dominated by the merchants of Brisbane.

Mr. MANN: The Chamber of Commerce.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about Mr. Hertzberg's presence at the Labour members' deputation this evening? (Laughter.)

Mr. FERRICKS: I was not there. This measure appears to be brought in with ulterior motives, and we cannot support it until we have a proper appraisal of this much-talked-of one vote one value. There is another matter on which I wish to say a few words, and that is about the proposal to introduce sectarian teaching in our State schools. When that proposal comes before this House I intend to vote against it.

Mr. KEOGH: And so say I. (Laughter.)

[Mr. Ferricks.]

Mr. FERRICKS: I made no bones about this matter in the past. I was very candid about it on the hustings. One of my opponents—and I must give the Ministerial candidate, Mr. Caine, the credit of saying it was not he—one of my opponents put up a question to me on this matter and I answered that question. That was at my initial meeting, and although I addressed twenty-four meetings after that in the space of twenty-one days, that question was never put up again. I have no intention of making a second-reading speech on the Bill. I just want to intimate that all the communications I have received from the Rev. Archdeacon Garland I have consigned to the waste-paper basket.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: When this proposal comes forward I shall vote against it. We have a complaint as Northern members on account of the curvy treatment meted out to the North by the present Government. Every day we see proposals emanating in the South for the extension of existing railways and for the construction of new railways. It seems to me that all they have to do in the South is to get up a deputation of half a dozen members of a progress association, go to the Minister for Railways, and lo and behold! they have a permanent survey promised, or the actual railway construction granted to them. In the North it is quite a different matter. Recently I approached the Railway Commissioner and made a request on behalf of sixteen new settlers for the installation of a railway siding. That settlement is about 39 miles from Bowen on new country, and if the men who are settled there desire to unload any commodity or to truck any of their produce to the jetty, they have to do it while the train waits—they have to bundle it into the trucks or bundle it out of the trucks, as the case may be. By this day's mail I got a further complaint about this matter, saying in their hurry to bundle out a new dray while the train waited they broke one of the shafts because the train could not wait to unload it properly, and the reply I got from the Railway Commissioner on this request is that "the matter will be considered." Again, my district has applied to the Treasurer, not for a special grant, but for the loan of a few pounds—and the money could be added to the harbour account, which is comparatively small—to light the Bowen Jetty, but I did not even get the courtesy of a reply from the Treasurer. I did get word from the Railway Commissioner saying the matter would be considered, but evidently the question of lighting the Bowen Jetty is not even going to get consideration.

The TREASURER: I think the municipality has been written to about it.

Mr. FERRICKS: I am talking about my action in the matter. Contrast that with what has been done in the South.

Mr. PAYNE: And then they ask us why we want separation.

Mr. FERRICKS: Only the other day we read in the columns of the fusion Press that there was a petition going in to the Railway Commissioner asking that an additional railway platform be constructed at Auchenflower to let the tennis players get off opposite their court.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: This is a tennis Government.

Mr. FERRICKS: A tennis Government! (Laughter.) There is no consideration for sixteen settlers who have recently taken up blocks of land in Northern Queensland, but our friends can get half a dozen platforms on

existing railways, and, if they like, a new railway altogether. Then, in addition to the fact that we have £4,000 spent on useless and superfluous additions to a house to accommodate a useless appendage to the Chamber at the other end of the building—the Legislative Council.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FERRICKS: And, further, we have a sum of £775, enough to install a dozen railway sidings for settlers on the land, spent on a lift in Parliament House, which has been constructed at the dictation of a venerable gentleman in another place, who I believe holds the office of Minister for political engineering—a gentleman who is known throughout the length and breadth of Queensland as the hero of a hundred political plots.

Mr. MURPHY: Has been all round the face of the clock.

Mr. FERRICKS: Has been all round the face of the clock, as the hon. member says. This gentleman can get a lift installed at a cost of £775, and yet when we, on behalf of the Northern settlers, ask for the installation of a railway siding we are told that the matter will be considered. And if we apply to the Treasurer with a request to provide workmen who have to go up and down the Bowen Jetty, while meat and coal trains are running, with lighting, to insure ordinary safety, we do not even get a reply at all. We have something like fifty settlers on Kelsey Creek, and we have unlimited land available there for settlement; and we have departmental and professional opinion on that land to show that it is as good as any there is on the Darling Downs—it is in the vicinity of Proserpine, in the vicinity of an 80,000 tons capacity mill, which is only crushing to the capacity of 50,000 tons—yet these settlers are asked to cart their sugar-cane 8 miles by road, and the Government absolutely refuses—at least it is some months ago since I approached the Minister for Railways and the Railway Commissioner, and I have never been able to get an answer one way or the other.

Mr. MURPHY: It is not lost sight of.

Mr. FERRICKS: It will be considered.

The TREASURER: Perhaps it has nothing to do with the railway.

Mr. FERRICKS: The Treasurer also says it is not in his province. Those forty or fifty settlers and those 150 group selectors who are waiting to go on their land, can go hang, so long as they get their railways down here in the South, so long as they get platforms at their tennis courts, so long as they get lifts in Parliament House, and other useless things. Then they talk about settling people on the land. I want to protest, as a representative of the North, at the treatment we are receiving at the hands of this unificationist Government—a Government that is doing more for unification than the people who have been characterised as unificationists. I venture to say that if a referendum were to be taken to-morrow as to who were the greatest unificationists in Queensland, I believe the majority would say the Premier and the *Brisbane Courier*.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The Treasurer.

Mr. FERRICKS: The Treasurer does not count. (Laughter.) We do not take the Treasurer into serious consideration where the Premier is mentioned—that, of course, is pretty well understood inside and outside this House. I only want to express my disapproval of the

action of the Premier in binding himself to the merchants of Brisbane and the Chamber of Commerce of Brisbane, when he was told that if he would not do as they wanted him his ricketty reign would be brought to a sudden termination. He was summoned to their dinner, and he agreed to give them what they wanted, and from the Governor's Speech which has been put forward, and the speeches delivered in this House, it is very plain that the Premier means to obey his dictators in the city in these matters.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NEVITT (*Carpentaria*): I wish, in common with other members, before commenting on the Address in Reply to express my sympathy with the relatives of the late King, also with the relatives of the late Hon. J. T. Annear, a former member of the other Chamber, and also to the Premier, who has suffered the loss of his wife. I may also mention, at the same time, that I sincerely hope it will not be long before the Speaker will be able to again preside over our deliberations—I trust that he will have a speedy return to health. Coming to the Address in Reply, I intend to treat in the first place with some things that are omitted from it. In days to come I think that this Government will be best known as the Government that tabled a great number of so-called non-party measures; it will also be known as a Government that held a greater number of caucus meetings than was ever held by any other Government. Of course, we have to remember that when this fusion first took place, the present Premier said that in future his legislation would be coloured according to his following, and we all remember that the first time the hon. junior member for Mackay proposed the adoption of the Address to the Governor he said that, as far as he was concerned, he would have no truck with a Trades Disputes Bill. The members in that fusion Government, who were led prior to that fusion by the hon. member for Townsville, there is not the slightest doubt had a great influence upon forecasting the programme before us at the present time. When the senior member for Maryborough was speaking, he considered there was no necessity for the introduction of a State Insurance Bill. I will give one or two instances why I consider it is absolutely necessary that a State Insurance Bill should be introduced and passed in this Chamber. It has been said that a number on the opposite side are shareholders in insurance companies, and that is the reason why it has not been brought before us.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is an absurd statement to make, all the same.

Mr. NEVITT: There is nothing absurd about it at all, in my estimation.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is very untrue.

The TREASURER: Can you name one who is a shareholder?

Mr. NEVITT: I could name one. I know men in this Chamber who are shareholders in insurance companies.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I very much doubt it.

Mr. NEVITT: You may doubt it, but I have no doubt about it. I will give you an example of how a man was treated in Charters Towers a little time ago by an insurance company—

Another glaring example has just come to hand of the one-sidedness of insurance policies.

An unsuspecting bush-worker was induced to take out one of these—an accident policy—and naturally

Mr. Nevitt.]

thought that if he met with an accident he would be compensated as per agreement. But he was very illiterate, and did not know that one of the conditions of the policy was that he should give notice of injury within fourteen days.

He met with an accident, but neglected to give notice until he came to town for medical treatment. The company then sheltered themselves behind the condition in the policy, and repudiated all liability. They then, under another clause, cancelled the policy altogether by giving notice to the assured.

I maintain that if we had a State insurance society they would not cloak themselves behind a clause of that description, because it would be to the advantage of this State to see that all their policy-holders were fairly treated. But how, by any stretch of imagination, can we say that they are now being fairly treated? Another case which came under my observation was that of a fire insurance company, and it is one which my friend who interjected some time ago may know something about. It was this: A blind man took out a fire policy on his house for £100. A little later on he took out another fire insurance policy on his house for £100, and in taking out the second policy he omitted to inform the company that he had already taken out a policy of £100. The place was burnt down and there were no suspicious circumstances whatever attached to the burning. But, because there was a clause in the agreement which said that he should notify the company if he had an insurance with any other company, and because the man did not notify the company, they refused to pay. They took the case to court and tried to beat him. Although he was a blind man he beat the insurance company, and the only way he did it was because the company could not swear that they read out the clause when the policy was taken out. I am pleased to say that the man won the case. If that was a State Insurance Company that had that policy it would not attempt to shield itself in that way.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is a State Insurance Company and there are six policies taken out under it.

Mr. NEVITT: Then why don't you advertise it? How do you expect the people to know that there is a State Insurance Company if you don't advertise the fact? Why don't you let it be known everywhere that there is a State insurance in Queensland. The day is not far distant when if the present Government does not willingly introduce a system of State insurance, then they will be compelled to do so by their masters, the people outside. The other night one gentleman on the other side interjected that the State Insurance Company in New Zealand was losing money. I find from the *Brisbane Courier* of the 7th July, that the State Insurance Department of New Zealand showed a profit for the past year of £2,698.

Hon. R. PHILP: They lost £5,000 last year.

Mr. NEVITT: There may have been a loss last year, but look at the benefit that the policy-holders got through the reduced premium that they paid as compared with the companies which the hon. gentleman has been interested in at different times.

Hon. R. PHILP: Excuse me, I have never had anything to do with any Fire Insurance Company.

Mr. NEVITT: You have no direct interest, but you have been connected with them.

[Mr. Nevitt.]

Hon. R. PHILP: No; neither directly nor indirectly.

Mr. NEVITT: You may not be now, but you were at one time.

Mr. FORSYTH: State insurance is a wrong principle.

Mr. NEVITT: They don't like this medicine, but they have got to take it. It was the hon. member for Moreton who said the other night that the New Zealand State insurance was losing money, and yet I showed that there was a profit of £2,698 last year. That does not convey the total amount of benefit received by the New Zealand people, because they pay 10, 15, and even 20 per cent, less in premiums than what they would otherwise do. It is found that in large companies who insure their employees themselves it costs 8s. per cent, to do it, whilst it costs 25s. per cent. in private companies—a difference of very nearly 200 per cent. Is it not wise that we should adopt similar methods and give the people of Queensland the benefit of these lower rates, rather than pay big dividends to insurance companies? The senior member for Townsville said the other night that never was Queensland more prosperous than it is at the present time. The Southern portion of Queensland is indeed prosperous, but there is a large percentage of Northern Queensland which is anything but prosperous. There are only two industries in the North—the sugar industry and the pastoral industry—which are prosperous at the present time. But take the mining industry, which North Queensland relies on to a great extent. Well, the mining industry was never lower in North Queensland than it is to-day.

Mr. FORSYTH: Nonsense!

Mr. NEVITT: It is not nonsense. The hon. member for Moreton said the other night that the immigration policy of the Government should be extended. The senior member for Townsville says "Hear, hear!" I should say "Hear, hear!" too if we could settle them on the land and provide them with work at a reasonable rate of wages. We heard the hon. member for Bowen to-night give several instances of an under rate of pay being paid in Northern Queensland. This is what appeared in the *Brisbane Courier* of the 8th July—

The labour market in the Bundaberg district is greatly congested. Crushing operations have already been commenced at six of the sugar-mills, and yet not the slightest diminution of the number of men seeking work is apparent. From the beginning of the present month until Wednesday the number of registrations at the local branch of the Labour Bureau was thrice that of the corresponding period of last year, and there are so many unemployed in and about the town already, that if men continue to come at the same rate as they have been during the past few weeks very many will have to go away disappointed.

That was the position in Bundaberg on the 8th of this month.

Mr. BARBER: There are 200 men there who have Buckley's chance of getting any work this crushing.

Mr. NEVITT: On the 21st of this month the *Courier* had the following:—

The cane inspector's report for the month of June was made available to-day by the Minister for Customs (our Melbourne representative telegraphed last night). In No. 1 district, Port Douglas, a shortage of labour is reported, and few, if any, of the fourteen gangs were up to their full numerical strength. At Lucinda labour was sufficient, and harvesting progressing favourably. In No. 2 district, Townsville, the supply of labour is in excess of the demand, but there was a little trouble with the white-labour gangs, principally on account of

the long, crooked cane. At Bowen there was sufficient labour to meet the demand. At Mackay, labour was plentiful, the class of men being generally good. No. 3 district, Bundaberg, had ample labour to meet requirements, and Maryborough also had ample labour. In No. 4 district, Brisbane, labour was ample for all requirements.

In spite of that we find shipload after shipload of them coming out here. On one or two occasions the steamers had 200 to 400 people on board. What are you going to do with them?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are all being absorbed.

Mr. NEVITT: Absorbed at 12s. or 15s. a week, as the hon. member for Bowen said.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Most of them are nominated passengers.

Mr. NEVITT: The reports I have just read are not from a Labour organ, or from a Labour member, but they are the reports of the Government cane inspectors, and, if you cannot accept the report from a Government inspector, who in the world can we expect you to accept a report from?

Mr. BARBER: There will be 200 out of work in Bundaberg.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I wish they would go on to the railways.

Mr. BARBER: They can't get away.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let them go to the Moreton Mill.

Mr. NEVITT: The junior member for Maryborough, in moving the adoption of the Address in Reply, enumerated a number of buildings which he said were about to be built in Brisbane, but as a matter of fact he mentioned some which were built and tenanted three or four months ago. He said that £500,000 was being spent at the present time in Brisbane, and he enumerated £220,000 worth, but out of that a number were built and have been occupied for some considerable time. I had a look over the insolvency lists, which is another criterion that the small man in Queensland is not so prosperous as we on this side would like him to be. Last year there was a total of 116 insol-

[8.30 p.m.] vencies, of which sixty were under £100. The total number dealt with, including those left over from the previous year, was 184. Of these eighty-two were under £100, thirty-six under £200, sixteen under £300, thirteen under £400, thirteen under £500, and twenty-four over £500. In the large majority of cases it is the poor man who is suffering. It is the old story—the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. We want to alter this condition of things, and we believe that if our methods were adopted we would be able to alter them. Another matter I consider should have been in the Governor's Speech is a legalised Eight Hour Bill. I suppose the reason why it is omitted by the Premier is because his legislation is coloured by his following. There is no mention either of State smelters in the Speech. If State smelters were erected in some of the mining districts, they would not be in the languishing condition they are in to-day. Three years ago the Cloncurry district and the country to the north-west of Cloncurry was in a flourishing condition; but owing to the slump in the copper market, where 400 or 500 men were working and making fair incomes some time ago, there are now very few instances of what we call "the gouger" working for himself. I may mention that the smelt-

ing works insists on getting 21 cwt. to the ton of copper ore. They charge 2 per cent. for moisture, 14 per cent. reduction on London prices, and no allowance is made for gold or other minerals which the ore may contain in addition to copper. If State smelters were erected in that district, before long there would be from 500 to 600 men employed on the known lodes, which will give anything from 7 to 15 and even 20 per cent. During the last year I took the trouble to go through the Medical Officer of Health's report, and also to look up some analyses I had by me of foods and patent medicines; and I consider that a pure food and drug Bill is a matter that ought to be dealt with by the Government. For many years the absolute necessity of such a measure in Queensland, and in Australia generally, has been known; and in some States, I am glad to say, they have taken active measures in this respect. Here is a quotation from the "British Medical Journal"—

It was monstrous that people should be allowed to produce in the public mind an exaggerated dread of disease simply to serve their own ends. It was intolerable that false hopes should be raised in persons suffering from incurable diseases and that money should be made out of patent medicines, and the medical profession ought to make some earnest effort to suppress this obtaining of money under false pretences.

I intend to give a few instances where they have obtained money under false pretences—first in connection with adulterated food, and afterwards in connection with patent medicines. My contention is that it should be made a criminal offence to knowingly adulterate food; and I think there is nothing more degrading than for a large number of people to be making money out of ignorant poor people who have not an opportunity of protecting themselves. According to the Medical Officer's report for 1908 one sample of milk contained no less than 26 per cent. of water. Members on the other side sometimes regret the large percentage of infantile mortality; but where is there a greater cause of infantile mortality than the watering of milk and the adulteration of milk? Two samples contained 15 per cent.; and, out of eighty-one samples tendered, sixty-six failed to pass the test. This is in Queensland. Do the Government try to remedy that? Are they taking the interest in this question they should take? It should be one of the first cares of any Government to see that its people, particularly the infants, get fair and proper food when they pay a fair and proper price.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is provision in our statutes for dealing effectively with the matter. It is for the municipalities and other local authorities to take action.

Mr. NEVITT: They cannot do so—they have not got the powers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They have the powers.

Mr. NEVITT: The law ought to be administered by the Government. How can a municipality in the outside districts administer a Pure Food and Drugs Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You were speaking about milk.

Mr. NEVITT: One sample of condensed milk placed on the market was found to be without a trace of butter fat. That was in Brisbane.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where was it manufactured?

Mr. NEVITT: It does not say.

Mr. Nevitt.]

The HOME SECRETARY: There is power to destroy in cases of that kind.

Mr. NEVITT: Anything that comes under the observation of the inspector and is sent to an analytical chemist and found to be under the standard—I admit that is destroyed; but the previous year the Medical Officer said that if he had more inspectors he would have been able to deal more satisfactorily with the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The condensed milk manufactured in Queensland generally contains too much butter fat.

Mr. NEVITT: I am glad to say that not one of those samples was a Queensland production. That is all the more reason why our own producers should be protected from the competition of inferior articles.

The HOME SECRETARY: We have a Bill to submit to the House giving increased powers to effect the object you have in view.

Mr. NEVITT: I am pleased to hear it. I want to get these facts into *Hansard* so that people may know they are buying adulterated food and valueless patent medicines.

The HOME SECRETARY: Quite recently a large amount of food was condemned in the Northern part of the State and destroyed under the present law.

Mr. NEVITT: What I am complaining about is—that there is not sufficient of it condemned. We find that one sample of raspberry contained 28 per cent. of proof spirit, one sample contained 70 grains of salicylic acid per gallon, and other samples were not genuine at all—they were not raspberry at all. Tea was adulterated with "lie" tea. Out of 37 samples of essences 11 only were genuine, and 26 were fictitious. The members of the Chamber of Commerce do not raise a howl for protection of the people. No; they wax fat at their expense.

The HOME SECRETARY: Does not that prove that the Department has been doing its duty?

Mr. NEVITT: The Commissioner stated that he has not sufficient inspectors to look after these things as they should be looked after. Then we had two samples of cider taken, and both were fictitious. Four samples of cordial were taken, and three were fictitious—75 per cent. Is it not time that this State of things was published throughout the length and breadth of Queensland to let the people know how these men down here are making money at the expense of their health? It is not only in connection with one line that this is happening. It applies to almost every line on the market. Custard powder was found to contain aniline dye. Mustard was adulterated with pepper and starch, some containing as much as 70 per cent. of starch. Peas, tinned—adulterated by the addition of from 1.5 to 3.5 grains of sulphate of copper per lb. One sample of hop beer contained over 25 per cent. of proof spirit. Where is the Excise Department? Then we come to the other side of the ledger. Schnapps contained 280 grains of sulphuric acid per gallon. Samples of rum were also analysed and found to contain nicotine. I say the man who is known to put nicotine in liquor should not be fined—he should be sent to gaol without the option. The same report states that 86 out of every 1,000 children die before they reach the age of 12 months. Is it any wonder when they have to feed upon

[Mr. Nevitt.]

substances such as I have read out? The only wonder is that a great many more do not die.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do not these instances prove that the department is alive to its duty?

Mr. NEVITT: It only proves that they are not sufficiently alive, when you find that every sample of articles taken is fictitious, and we know that large quantities of these articles are consumed.

Mr. LENNON: There is practically no provision for stopping the adulteration of grog in Queensland at the present time.

Mr. NEVITT: And very little apparently over the food they consume either.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: All these figures that you are quoting are Government figures.

Mr. NEVITT: I am forced to the conclusion that commercial morality is at a lower ebb to-day than it has ever been in the history of the world before, and requires a great deal more supervision. We find that out of 158 samples of milk taken 64 were below the standard—adulterated from 1 to 23 per cent. I think there were only two of three milk vendors fined, a very large number being let off with a caution. I say that any justice or magistrate who discharges a man charged with adulterating milk with a caution is not doing his duty. Any man who does such a thing should be sent to gaol. The Government Analyst says that last year the aggregate fines for adulterating milk was £200, and he says that the milk vendors of Brisbane were making £2,000 out of added water. Does that prove that the department is doing its duty, when these people are allowed to vend their wares without supervision of any kind? Now we come to spirits, and what do we find? Out of 42 samples only 15 passed, 27 being below the standard. Lime juice—seven samples, one only genuine. I guarantee that I could go round Brisbane to-morrow and get fifty samples of limejuice, and yet out of seven samples only one was genuine. In the light of that fact, every warehouse in Brisbane should be visited.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is regularly done.

Mr. NEVITT: It cannot be done very regularly when only seven samples were taken in twelve months. Three of the samples were adulterated lime juices, which contained salicylic acid, and three others citric acid and salicylic acid as well. This is how you are feeding the community, and hon. members on the other side are practically defending it by their attitude.

Mr. COBBER: We are not defending it.

Mr. NEVITT: Six samples of coffee were taken. Three contained coffee and chicory in equal parts—being sold as such—and three contained roasted cereals—two roasted barley and one roasted wheat.

Mr. COBBER: Why don't you get at the manufacturers?

Mr. NEVITT: Those are the gentlemen I want to get at. It is generally the poor, unfortunate shopkeeper, who does not know what he is selling, who is punished, while the other man gets off.

The HOME SECRETARY: Will the hon. member inform us how we can inspect factories that are not within our borders?

Mr. NEVITT: I am not asking that factories beyond the State should be inspected.

I am asking that factories within the State should be inspected to see that they put on the market a fair and reasonable article of diet.

The HOME SECRETARY: I am pleased to say that our own factories are doing that.

Mr. NEVITT: Cordials and vinegar were both adulterated. Olive oil: One sample was taken, and that was cotton-seed oil—not a trace of olive oil in it. If an ordinary individual took a sample and found it was fictitious, he would go to every place where that article was offered for sale and see whether every sample was the same or not.

Mr. CORSER: They find that they are all well-known brands. It is only in a few shops they find those.

Mr. NEVITT: Is it? Only a few samples are taken, so that it is impossible to say in how many places they are sold. Thirty-three samples of sauces were taken, and of these three were condemned as decomposing, three contained sulphides, and one contained 12 per cent. proof spirit. Of pepper, eight samples were examined. Four were genuine and four contained starch from 4 to 70 per cent. Of seven samples of fish, five were condemned. With regard to potted meats, the analyst says a great number were adulterated with from 19 to 129 grains of boric acid per 1 lb. Those were not Queensland products. Of twenty samples of peas, thirteen were found to be genuine, and seven were coloured with sulphate of copper. Then we have an article which has been placed on the market under the name of "papaw salt," and the public have been gulled into using it as a digestive salt. The analyst states that the salt is useless as a digestive agent. It contains no active principle beyond the ordinary principle of salt, and yet it was sold as a digestive agent. I say the man who prepared and put that article on the market under those representations should go to gaol.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where was that manufactured?

Mr. NEVITT: I believe in Brisbane, but I do not know for a fact. This is what the Chief Inspector says with regard to his work—

More food was destroyed last year than ever before, and the total would have been augmented greatly only that special efforts had to be made to keep records of plague cases.

The HOME SECRETARY: That shows they are active.

Mr. NEVITT: I grant that they are doing better than they had done previously, but I want them to do still better. (Hear, hear!) According to that report, if the medical officer had had more time and more inspectors, there would have been a great deal more food destroyed than was actually destroyed, so that a great deal of adulterated food must have gone into consumption. Now I come to patent medicines, the facts concerning which will prove an eye-opener to hon. members. Some few days ago I noticed that a question on this subject was asked in the New South Wales Parliament. It was pointed out to the Minister that a mixture was put on the market which cost only one-fortieth of a penny to manufacture, and yet people were called upon to pay 2s. 6d. for it, and the Minister was asked if he would take action to prevent that article going on the market. What was his reply? His reply was that it would not be fair to single out one

article for prohibition, implying that the market was smothered with that class of goods. In another case which came under my observation a firm in Melbourne were prosecuted for selling a mixture, containing 42 per cent. of proof spirit and less than 1 per cent. of any other traceable constituent, labelled to be administered three times a day to infants.

Mr. KEOGH: There is plenty of grog sold in Brisbane that does not contain 42 per cent. of proof spirit. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. NEVITT: There is not the slightest doubt about that. This is one of the methods by which infants are taught to consume alcohol.

The HOME SECRETARY: Was that not in Victoria?

Mr. NEVITT: Yes, the prosecution took place in Melbourne. It is a well-known fact that a great number of these patent medicines contain opium and other narcotics, and the quantities are not given as I maintain they should be given.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I thought the quantities had to be given under the Commonwealth law.

Mr. NEVITT: The Commonwealth law only applies to imported articles, and that does not protect us from our own unscrupulous manufacturers, of whom there are plenty, judging from this report. Some of those unscrupulous adulterators are really murderers. Let me give a sample of the article produced by one of them. The analytical chemist got hold of a preparation called "Aquamiel," of which he gives the following particulars:—

This remedy is exploited by the American Remedy Company claiming it to be the miracle of Nature, a magic bust developer and the most marvellous flesh-producing, blood-enriching, tissue-forming preparation the world ever knew. Permanent development guaranteed. Aquamiel is a product of the famous Magney plant of Mexico.

This is the analysis of the preparation—Water, 97.33 per cent.; alcohol by volume, 2 per cent.; ash, 0.028 per cent.; sugar, 0.14 per cent.; saccharine, 0.50 per cent.; solution coloured with caramel.

Mr. CORSER: They cannot import that now with those memoranda on it.

Mr. NEVITT: I am giving samples which have been taken by inspectors and forwarded to the analytical chemist, who tells us what the contents of those samples were, showing the unscrupulousness of the manufacturer. The concluding remarks of the analyst on that sample are—

Aquamiel is absolutely worthless, and the representations made concerning it are false and fraudulent.

Another preparation called "Californian Syrup of Figs" is thus described—

Contains podophyllin, lemma, and ginger; podophyllin is one of the active poisons, and the mixture contains no preparation of figs.

Then there is a so-called cure for consumption. The chief agent in this compound is claimed to be Cannabis Sativa. Examination showed the active agent to be opium. The only virtue that resides in opium as a cure for consumption is that it frequently affords the unfortunate patient some relief, but as far as a cure is concerned it is absolutely worthless; but it makes an opium fiend of the person who uses it.

Mr. CORSER: All those importations are struck out now.

Mr. NEVITT: These things can be manufactured in our own State to-day.

Mr. Nevitt]

Mr. CORSER: They cannot be imported from Mexico.

Mr. NEVITT: They can be manufactured in our own State, and we have practically no protection against the manufacturer. That man is worse than a murderer, because, in the case of an ordinary murderer, you have a chance to protect yourself; but in this case you have no opportunity for self-protection. When a medicine is placed before a man labelled in this manner, what is the poor victim of that fell disease to do? How often do you find men so afflicted going from one doctor to another, and from one district to another, in order to obtain some alleviation of their sufferings. When such an article as that to which I have referred, and which professes to be a cure for consumption, is placed before such people, they are tempted to try it, and the result is that they become opium victims, and their life is a thousand times worse than it was before; and it was bad enough, God knows! Here is another article which came under my observation. It is a so-called electrical apparatus. It is a small aluminium cone which has to be dipped into a liquid, and then inserted into the ear. It is said to cure deafness. The liquid, when examined, was found to be composed principally of red pepper; the warmth of the application was supposed to be engendered by electricity. The cost was about £1 10s.; its commercial value is about 3d., and its remedial value nil. As far as having any beneficial effect on deafness is concerned, its effect is nil. And yet that kind of thing is allowed to be placed on the market, and the suffering public are gulled by it. The so-

[9.30 p.m.] called electricity is cayenne pepper, which, as everyone knows, tickles the drum of the ear, and sets up a certain amount of irritation. I say it is the duty of the Government to protect the public against such frauds as those. That is on the market in Queensland. I saw it not very long ago, and I saw a woman who had been a victim to deafness for some years, and she had very hard work indeed to get £1 10s. to buy it. Now, what does the *Drug Journal* say on this matter? It says—

People who are being dosed with recognised poisons have a right to a knowledge of the kind and quantity which should be made to appear on the label. All preparations should, as a condition precedent to their sale, be submitted to the State Board of Pharmacy for registration, as required under the laws of some countries.

That is what I want this present Government to do. I want, before any patent medicine is placed on the market, that it should run the gauntlet of the Government Analytical Chemist, so that no person would then be deceived in the manner they are deceived to-day, and nobody would be able to make fortunes at the expense of the poor, because that is what it amounts to. The *Drug Journal* further says—

We do not believe in the rule of secret monopoly preparations, because neither a secret nor a monopoly in medicines is conducive to medical progress or independence, and hence, to the welfare of the people.

When they speak in that manner, I think it is high time the Government of every State should take up the cudgels on behalf of its people. To show you that food and drugs are not the only things adulterated, only this morning the following came under my notice—

"Is it a fact," asked Mr. Higgs of the Minister for Customs, "that boots not wholly made of leather, but of leather and strawboard, are im-

[Mr. Nevitt.

ported and sold as genuine leather boots?" The Hon. F. G. Tudor's reply was that if the goods were truthfully described there was no power to prohibit their importation. Every effort would be made to enforce the law, but there was an absence of State legislation penalising the local sale of shoddy and worthless goods.

That is exactly the point I wish to make. There is very little effort on the part of the present Government—as far as I know there is no effort whatever as far as goods are concerned. Certainly there has been a little effort as far as food and drugs are concerned, but I contend that a great deal more power should be placed in that department so that the people would be protected. We find in some countries they are taking very drastic measures to put down this kind of thing. We find in France that if a person is found a second time to have on his premises adulterated goods, they have the power to write upon his window. "Adulterated goods sold in this department," and to enumerate the adulteration that the goods contain. I venture to say that if something of that description obtained in Queensland there would very soon be an exodus from the market of a number of articles that are placed before the public in an adulterated form. In South Australia, if a person is convicted three times of selling adulterated goods, they have the power to print in a local paper, as many times as they think necessary, that this company or this man had sold adulterated goods in a particular shop. If that system were adopted, no man would attempt to place on the market goods, or medicines, of a fraudulent nature. The only conclusion I can come to is, as the hon. member for Bowen said earlier in the evening, that the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce seem to have a very big grip on the gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury benches.

Mr. CORSER: That is unfair. The Brisbane Chamber of Commerce does not approve of adulteration.

Mr. NEVITT: I am saying that the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce do not take any action in the matter; they have not brought the matter under the notice of the public in any shape or form.

Mr. CORSER: Probably they know nothing about it.

Mr. NEVITT: A number of these goods are produced in Brisbane.

Mr. CORSER: I have never heard of most of them before.

Mr. NEVITT: I am very pleased I am doing some little good, because it was not for the purpose of educating members on the Government benches; it was to let the people of Queensland have an opportunity of knowing the position of affairs in this respect that I am taking up the attitude I am. I saw some two or three years ago—I think it was the late Premier of the Commonwealth, the Hon. Alfred Deakin, who made use of these remarks on one occasion. He said—

That there was a party in the country whose God was need, whose devil was greed, and whose practice was to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market.

I think those words apply very forcibly to those gentlemen who make, or manufacture, the goods I have enumerated.

Mr. CORSER: Hear, hear!

Mr. NEVITT: To conclude this matter of a Food and Drugs Bill, I shall quote a few

lines from Adam Smith. Speaking of the political and economic duties of Governments, he said—

The protection, as far as possible, of every member of society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it, or the duty of establishing an exact administration of justice.

That I commend to the gentlemen sitting on the Government benches.

Mr. BOWMAN: One of the regrettable things in regard to this programme is that this matter is omitted.

Mr. NEVITT: That is what I complain of—it is one of the omissions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A Pure Food and Drugs Bill is absolutely ready for introduction. Give us a chance.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NEVITT: I say this: "Better late than never." But we had no information whatever that the Government were going to introduce a Pure Food and Drugs Bill, or at least I had not, and I have gone to some little trouble during the recess in collecting these facts—because they are facts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We recognise the necessity, and are willing to introduce it the first chance we get.

Mr. BOWMAN: Why did you not include it in your programme?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have it all ready.

Mr. NEVITT: It is one of the most important things that could be dealt with, and you say now you have it in the background. Now I come to the Address that was read by His Excellency. I think the Constitutional advisers of the Governor should, when they ask the representative of His Majesty to read a speech—I think at least they should be candid—I might say truthful—because there is one paragraph that is not altogether a true statement of fact, and that is this—

I recall with pleasure the fact that His present Majesty King George V. has visited Queensland—

That is a fact, we admit, and from personal observation knows our conditions, our problems, and our aspirations.

I venture to say that there are very few men in this Chamber who know the problems, the conditions, and the aspirations of the various sections of the community of Queensland. Take the example this afternoon—the discussion that took place as to whether separation should take place in Queensland. I say the hon. gentlemen in the responsible position of Ministers to-day do not know the aspirations of a large number of the people of Queensland.

Mr. ALLEN: They are completely out of touch.

Mr. NEVITT: They are completely out of touch with a great number of the people of Queensland. The next paragraph I shall mention is a rather pleasing one, and that is the one that mentions the condition of the eyes of the children. I give credit to the Government for having taken action, first of all in sending Dr. Taylor to the Western and some of the Northern parts of Queensland to examine the children's eyes. They have instituted a system that where there are no doctors children are supplied with eye water and ointment. I have been through the district since that system has been commenced, and I can say that a very great benefit has accrued therefrom. I trust that the Government will not rest on their oars, but will go

considerably further, and later on in the session I intend to bring under the notice of the Government matters that I think they should go into—that is, the medical and dental examination of the children, and in one or two other directions. However, I am pleased to give the Government credit for that, because it is appreciated by a large number of the people of Queensland. Now, the last paragraph of the Governor's Speech—and the leader of the Opposition referred to this matter—says—

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

The Estimates for the current year, framed with due regard to economy and to the requirements of the public service, will shortly be laid before you. It will be found that liberal provision has been made for improving the position of a large number of the lower-salaried employees, and my advisers hope that the proposed increases will meet with your approval.

I interjected at that time that it was pure sarcasm; I say there was never a more sarcastic line penned than that. The members on this side, in season and out of season, have been advocating a rise in salary to the lower-paid servants.

Mr. ALLEN: Yes, but they were thinking of the majority on that side.

Mr. NEVITT: I would like to be able to think so. Last year, when they increased the term of the Commissioner for Railways for seven years, they also increased his salary by £250 a year. They had not the welfare of the lower-grade servants at heart then. They had money to do it then, and yet they now turn round and say, "We hope it will meet with your approval." There is another matter which I maintain the Government could have placed upon their programme, and done a good deal for the people of Queensland in general—that is, take over a State coalmine. We have any quantity of coal-bearing land in Queensland which they could work, and they would then be able to pay a fair wage to the miners, and there would be less likelihood of strikes such as they had in New South Wales a little time ago. Then, in conservative Victoria they have found it is absolutely essential to protect themselves against the avarice of the coal proprietors of New South Wales, and get a coalmine of their own. We find the same thing applies to New Zealand, and yet the gentlemen on the other side do not consider it is to the welfare of Queensland to get a coalmine, although they are the largest consumers of coal.

Mr. D. HUNTER: How much does the New Zealand Government pay for its coal?

Mr. NEVITT: The New Zealand Government produce the greater part of the coal they require from their own coalmine, and they are retailing it to private individuals at considerably less than they were able to get it prior to the institution of this coalmine.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Your statement is entirely wrong.

Mr. NEVITT: Go inside the library, and you will find that what I am stating is a fact. The next question I come to is that of the redistribution of seats. As a Northern member I intend to take up a very emphatic attitude on this question. The redistribution of seats will only have one effect, and that is to increase the political power of Brisbane and districts and the Southern portion of Queensland. It is said that they are going to give

Mr. Nevitt.]

us one vote one value, but no one on that side has attempted to define what is one vote one value.

Mr. D. HUNTER: What is the referendum but one vote one value?

Mr. NEVITT: Some of them have said that there are a lot of inequalities in the different electorates in Queensland. We admit that there are a number of inequalities, but it also means that if this redistribution of seats takes place it will increase, at the expense of the Northern and Central districts, the political representation of Brisbane.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Why should they not if they have the numbers here?

Mr. NEVITT: I will give you, before I have done, some reasons why they should not get more representation than they have got. Only the other day I had occasion to interview the Orphanage branch. This will give you one instance as to how the people in the Northern part of the State are placed on a different footing to those in the Southern part. I got a letter from one of my constituents who wanted to come under the orphanage grant. I had to get the papers, and send them away to North Queensland, which took ten days. They had to be filled in and returned to the Inspector of Orphanages in Townsville; then they had to be sent back from Townsville to Normanton to the inspector of police for a report, and then come from Normanton to Brisbane, before a grant could be made. If that case had occurred in Brisbane, I could have got all that was required in a day, and the grant would have been made or rejected inside twenty-four hours; and yet in this case it took over a month before the applicant for the orphanage allowance got what she applied for. Then, again, the allowance is only given from the date on which it is granted, not from the date of the application. At the present time when an old-age pension is granted by the Federal authorities it is paid from the date of the application, and I maintain that the Orphanages Branch should do the same thing. You may have an applicant in one of our hospitals in the North who wants to come down to Diamantina or Dunwich. We have to make application by letter from the North to the Home Department, and wait till we get a reply back, and then you have to send word. A hospital in that case is penalised to the extent of two or three months, where if they are within railway communication with Brisbane they can get it in a day or two.

Mr. D. HUNTER: You should bring it under the notice of the department.

Mr. NEVITT: I have brought it before the department several times, and with very little result. If we want a railway, and arrange for a deputation to interview the Minister for Railways, can we collect a number of people up there, and bring them down to interview the Minister? It takes some ten days to come down, then you have to get an interview with the Commissioner or Minister, and then it takes ten days to go back again. It is impossible for the people in the Northern part of Queensland under the present Administration, to get the justice they are entitled to, and this Redistribution of Seats Bill will only aggravate it.

Mr. KEOGH: How much worse would we be under unification?

Mr. D. HUNTER: They voted for federation.

Mr. NEVITT: Only the other day we find they required more police protection for Wool-

[*Mr. Nevitt.*]

loongabba. They can organise a deputation and come to the Minister. If we require police protection, we cannot do that.

Mr. D. HUNTER: You don't need police protection up there.

Mr. NEVITT: Fortunately we do not require it as much as you here, for they have to watch your crowd. Another thing: The Government does not provide a beautiful park for us in the North and light it up; neither an art gallery nor a public library. These are the things which Northern and Central Queensland are suffering from. If with the present representation we get this, what are we going to do when the representation is increased? Another thing, if I want to get round my electorate, it costs me about £30 in coach fares. How many members are there in this Chamber who have to pay £30 for a coach to get round his electorate?

Mr. WALKER: I pay more than that to keep a horse.

Mr. NEVITT: I do not know what sort of horse it is.

Mr. KEOGH: You have got a bike.

Mr. NEVITT: A bike is no good in that country. The hon. member for Woolloongabba represents a large electorate, so far as numbers are concerned, but there are the same community of interests there. My electorate is 70,000 square miles in area, but where are the community of interests? There are a number of conflicting interests in that electorate; and what about the physical features of that electorate? Is there any comparison between that electorate and Woolloongabba.

Mr. D. HUNTER: You do not represent the physical features.

Mr. NEVITT: There are conflicting interests in the electorate I represent, and they will be increased if you enlarge the area, as it is proposed to do, according to the quota they are going to take, as we have been informed by members who have spoken on the subject. How do they deal with this question in other parts of the world? Take Great Britain as an illustration of this point. We find that the constituencies nearer to the seat of government are allowed to retain a very large number of constituents as compared with those constituencies some distance away. I will take two large ones and two small ones to show you. In Romford, Essex, they have 45,570 electors, and in Walthamstow they have 35,321. In Durham they have only 2,580 electors, and in Bury St. Edmonds 2,740, yet this is a place which is not as large as my electorate. They allow one constituency to have twenty times as many electors as another. The further they are away from the seat of government the lesser number of electors qualify for a member of the House of Commons. It is the same in Wales. In Cardiff they have 27,057 electors; Montgomery, 3,313; Merthyr Tydvil, 21,438; and Flint, 3,659. The further they get away from the seat of government the lesser number of electors there are.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Do you believe in that?

Mr. NEVITT: Yes; conscientiously and honestly I do.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Then you are against the referendum.

Mr. NEVITT: There is no comparison between them.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is not a case of the distance from the seat of Government in England. It is because some are boroughs and they are allowed members.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes; it is a survival of the old rotten borough system that has been a curse in England.

Mr. NEVITT: The same thing occurs in Scotland. Patrick (Lanarkshire) has 21,411 electors, and Sutherland 1,383; or one has fourteen and a-half times the electoral representation of the other. Is there a constituency in Queensland that has fourteen and a-half times the electoral representation of the other? Then again, in Ireland we have Belfast with 16,000 and Newry with 1,905. It is the same thing all through. Taking into consideration the distance from the seat of government and the community of interests, the outside places are allowed a fewer number of electors, and the same thing should apply to the outside places in Queensland. The hon. member for Herbert in speaking the other night suggested a zone system which would be applicable to Queensland. While the zone system would be an improvement, still it would not be sufficient, because Charters Towers has got two members, and it would still retain two members under a redistribution of seats. Charters Towers is 700 miles from Brisbane, and St. George is a considerable distance; but it would not be fair to say that the community of interests was the same in each place. Where there are large tracts of country there should not be the same number of electors as are required in large centres of population.

Mr. D. HUNTER: A split in the party.

Mr. NEVITT: If that party over there was as homogeneous and democratic as this party, they would do. I will reserve my remarks on the Licensing Bill and the Land Bill until those measures are before the House. There are a number of non-party measures to be introduced by this non-party Government. I notice that the Government are introducing a Bill for an amendment of the Factories and Shops Act. About a fortnight ago I asked the following questions of the Minister for Public Works and received the answers attached—

Did the department send a female inspector of factories and shops to Toowoomba some short time ago?

Yes.

As a result of that inspection, was it not found that a large number of storekeepers were keeping back or refusing to pay for overtime?

Yes, but apparently through ignorance of the law. See how easy it is for them to apologise for the gentleman of means. It was apparently through ignorance of the law! I also asked—

What are the names of storekeepers and amounts each was called on to pay his employees as a result of that inspection?

And the reply was—

Twelve (12) employers were affected, and arrears of overtime amounting to £166 were paid.

There were no names given at all. These sacred gentlemen, although they were robbing their workmen to the extent of £166, must even have their names suppressed, and were not even taken to a court of justice. It is shameful. I also asked—

Will the Minister send a male inspector to see if the Act is being complied with?

And the Minister replied—

A male inspector has been appointed to the Toowoomba district, and is now stationed there permanently, having taken up his duties on 1st July last.

I would like to know what has been the result

of that inspection. This is the way that justice is administered in Queensland to-day. Storekeepers can rob their employees of £166, and their names are not to be mentioned; but what about this case which I read in the *Brisbane Courier* the other day. A poor woman in Queen street went into Finney, Isles's premises and stole goods to the value of 1s. 4d. Was that woman's name disclosed? She was taken up before the police court, and not only was her name disclosed and advertised throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, but she was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment without the option of a fine. Twelve storekeepers can rob their employees of £166 and nothing is said about taking them to court or publishing their names, but this woman is imprisoned! Is this equal justice? This is the administration of justice in Queensland to-day. It is time that the people rose up and asked what this Government are doing. The same woman was charged with stealing a pair of child's socks and a piece of ribbon from Edwards and Lamb. The value is not given, but I should say it was about one or two shillings. For this charge she was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment, the sentences to be cumulative. This is what the presiding magistrate, Colonel Moore, said to the woman—

"The bench is determined to put this sort of thing down," remarked Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Moore, P.M., in the Central Police Court yesterday, when dealing with a woman charged with shop-lifting. The defendant's name was Mary Linorst, and she appeared on two charges—(1) of having stolen two pieces of ribbon, valued at 1s. 4d., the property of Finney, Isles, and Co., Limited, and (2) of having stolen a pair of child's socks and a piece of ribbon, the property of Edwards and Lamb. The defendant pleaded guilty in each case.

Mind, I do not defend any person who is guilty of stealing; but is it right to imprison a woman for twenty-eight days for stealing articles valued at 3s. or 4s. and publish her name to the world, and allow twelve storekeepers to rob their employees of £166 without publishing their names?

Mr. KEOGH: What about that boy in England who stole a lump of coal and got lagged?

Mr. NEVITT: I am not speaking of England or Ireland; I am dealing with Queensland. During last week two so-called gentlemen—bakers in Brisbane—were charged with selling bread short in weight, and were fined 6d. per ounce for every ounce short. They were fined because it was a deliberate

robbery of the community; but [9.30 p.m.] they were not sent to gaol. The

moral I derive from these cases is this: The rich rob the poor, and get fined; the poor rob the rich, and go to gaol. I think that when a man robs his employees, as I have pointed out, the Government should advertise him in the town in which he does business—and throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, if necessary. I now wish to say something in regard to railways. The other day I asked the Secretary for Railways was it true that porters were being asked to do shunter's work at porter's wages of 6s. a day, and the answer I got was "No." Though I do not say the Minister is aware of the fact, I can tell him that some thirty-eight men were asked during last month whether they would undertake shunting work at 6s. a day, though there is a regulation stating that, if a man performs duties higher than those of his classification, he will be paid the lowest rate of pay for the work in that classification. Some of the men who have done

Mr. Nevitt.]

shunting before have received 6s. 6d. a day, which is the lowest rate paid for shunting, yet some of them have been called on during the last fortnight to do the work at 6s. a day. In the Governor's Speech we are told that the Government are going to increase the wages of the lower-paid servants.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have been increased.

Mr. NEVITT: It is a case of increasing with one hand and taking away with the other.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. NEVITT: I believe I can get the gentleman who told me this to come forward and give the information to the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Ask him to come to me, and make good his case.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He knows he would lose his billet.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know that is not so.

Mr. NEVITT: A number of the men have refused to do the work at the reduced rate; and I hope the Minister will look into the matter. Now I come to a local matter. Mention is made in the Speech of a Railway Bill. We have not been told what it means, but we have some little idea, because during the last six or eight months there has been a good deal of literature distributed throughout Queensland on what is termed a transcontinental railway. I do not know who is financing the scheme or engineering it. I am like the Scotchwoman in that respect—I am thinking a good deal about it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I don't mind telling you who is engineering it—it is the Railway Department.

Mr. NEVITT: I am speaking of political engineering. There is a good deal of political engineering going on in connection with this transcontinental scheme. The hon. member for Townsville, the other night, said the scheme would be the means of taking the trade of that part of Queensland to its natural port; but I beg to differ from him. Though he did not advocate it on the floor of this Chamber the other night, in the Chamber of Commerce, a few days before, he said the people of Townsville were desirous of pushing the railway from Cloncurry in the direction of Camooweal. I do not say Camooweal is not deserving or wanting a railway; but I do say that the trade of Camooweal and Barklay Downs and that part of the Northern Territory should go to its natural port on the Gulf 200 miles away; and it is a wilful waste of money to make a line from Cloncurry to Camooweal for trade that ought to go to Burketown or Normanton. These are the words the hon. member used in the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce—

He had frequently urged, both in and out of Parliament, for an extension of the existing lines westward, and a transcontinental line to connect them. Speaking from the Townsville standpoint, they had pushed out their line to Cloncurry, and they would not be satisfied until they reached Camooweal or near it.

He said the people of Townsville had pushed the line out to Cloncurry. Though the hon. gentleman said it would not be fair to ask the people of Cloncurry to pay freight on 500 miles when they could get their produce to the Gulf in a little over 200 miles, now he wants to go right to Camooweal, which would be 790 miles, as against a little over 200 miles if it went to its natural port. I am afraid that

[Mr. Nevitt

there is some political engineering going on. During the Federal election the Premier—I am sorry he is not in his place—when at Allora was using what I may term, to say the least, political bribery. In speaking to a deputation that waited on him about a railway, he made use of these remarks—

Mr. Kidston thanked them for the hearty reception they had given him. He agreed that they had the two essentials mentioned for the building of a line, and if the Government could promote closer settlement it was prepared to face a loss for the first few years in doing so. With facilities their district would be given a chance for closer settlement, and this was what the Government wanted—to put the country to its utmost use.

This is the point—

He was sorry that he had not visited their beautiful district before; had he done so, the line might have been now in hand. (Applause.) He sincerely hoped, and believed, that their line would be amongst those tabled next session. (Applause.) Mr. Kidston concluded by pleading for the ratification of the Federal Financial Agreement, and for their votes for the three liberal candidates for the Senate, and for Mr. Groom, urging them to throw aside all personal feelings, and to vote the ticket.

If that is not political bribery, I would like to know what is. I am quite satisfied that there is a great deal of this kind of thing going on in connection with this transcontinental railway, because I have in my possession plenty of proof of it—too much of it to read it all to-night. There is Mr. Wilson—a Melbourne gentleman, I believe—and both he and the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* make statements that are not in accordance with fact. They also state—as was stated by the senior member for Townsville—but I shall give the exact words—

Keeping east of the Georgina, Buckingham Downs is reached, then Boulia, and so on, carrying Brighton Downs, Diamantina Lakes, Dunham Towers, Daveuport Downs, and other well-known stations on the east, and it would be the means of bringing the trade of this fruitful district to its natural port.

Well, I maintain that it would do nothing of the kind, because I have here a table showing the relative distances from the Gulf ports and from the places where the trade of this district will be taken. I find that Birdsville is 300 miles nearer a Gulf port than it is to Brisbane. Beetoota is 250 miles nearer a Gulf port than it is to Brisbane. Windorah is 150 miles nearer a Gulf port than it is to Brisbane. Bedourie is 300 miles nearer a Gulf port than to Rockhampton. Urandangie is 350 miles nearer a Gulf port than to Townsville. Carrandotta is 250 miles nearer the Gulf than to Townsville. Camooweal is 450 miles nearer a Gulf port than it is to Townsville. Cloncurry is 250 miles nearer a Gulf port than to Townsville. Boulia is 200 miles nearer a Gulf port than to the eastern coast. Mount Elliott and Hampden are 250 miles nearer the Gulf than to the port to which they want to take the trade of those places. They have already fleeced the trade of a number of these places from their natural port, and they want to fleece still more. The railway system of this country has been conceived in iniquity and born in corruption, because any system that has that result cannot be described in any other terms. Last year I presented two petitions to this House praying for railway construction from the Gulf ports. One of them contained something like 1,300 signatures. I forget the number who signed the other petition. Both of those ports are entitled to railway communication with their back country. At the back of Burketown, on the Gregory River, we have as fine a piece of

country as there is in any part of Australia. If hon. members look at Mr. George Phillips's report, they will find that there are something like 50,000 acres of irrigable land—land of the finest quality, and water running down the Gregory River at the rate of 150,000,000 to 200,000,000 gallons a day, which only requires to be raised to the level of the surface of the land to irrigate it, and it is said to be equal to any sugar land in Queensland. If that country was in any other part of Queensland, it would have had railway communication long ago. After tapping that country, the line could be continued to the Barklay Tableland. By so doing, the trade of that district would be taken to its natural port without robbing any other port of what belongs to it. You would also bring about a large amount of settlement there, and in the southern part of Northern Territory, as the greater part of the trade of that part of the country would come over the railway. Mr. Phillips also states that there are about 400 miles of mineral country, known as Lawn Hills, which would be tapped by that line, and that would mean a further large amount of settlement, and the people there would consume the produce you would be able to raise on the Gregory River, Running Creek, and Black Creek, and several other of those streams. There is another reason why those places are entitled to railway construction. Those two ports are the only ports for about 1,000,000 head of cattle and between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 sheep. If a railway was taken from those ports, instead of having only a few sheep as we have now, the Barklay Tableland would no doubt carry a great number of sheep, and the wool would go to Burketown. It could be exported at a reasonable price; but if the producers are called upon to pay for 700 miles of railway carriage, that is going to deprive the producer of the amount he will have to pay in extra railway rates. It is unjust that those people should be forced to send their goods over 700 miles of railway when they can get it taken to a port a little over 200 miles distant. It is well known that the Cloncurry Railway only touches the fringe of the copper country. There were more miners working at Cloncurry before the railway was taken there than are working there to-day. The Great Australian Mine was working for some considerable time before the advent of the railway, and shortly after the railway was opened the mine was closed. That not only applies to the Great Australian Mine but to a great number of others.

Mr. FORSYTH: Why was it closed down?

Mr. NEVITT: I believe it was closed down simply because the capital was exhausted—or that was one of their reasons.

Mr. FORSYTH: It would not pay.

Mr. NEVITT: I do not believe it was due to that.

Mr. FORSYTH: I know, because I am a director of the company.

Mr. NEVITT: I will take the hon. member's argument that the mine was not paying. If they had a railway to their natural port—Normanton—the expense of production would have been very considerably reduced.

Mr. FORSYTH: You don't know much about it.

Mr. NEVITT: I know that much about it. I do not need the expert witness of the hon.

member. It is self-evident that it would be much cheaper to carry anything over 200 miles of railway than over 480 miles.

Mr. FORSYTH: You can get goods to Cloncurry for £1 4s. a ton. How much would it take to bring goods from Burketown by steamer?

Mr. NEVITT: It would not cost a great deal more from Burketown if the country was developed, as it would be if it had a railway and that railway was taken to Cloncurry. The line from Townsville does not touch the mineral country at all. If it ran from Burketown or Normanton, it would go through the heart of the mineral country, and people would be settled on the country. Copper is not the only mineral in that district. There is also gold. The Bower Bird Goldfield was worked long ago, and I believe if a railway were constructed that field would carry a fair number of men. The Lost Call and other fields would also carry a fair number of men. In fact, there are people who are prepared to work some of the shows now if they could get the stone crushed, but they cannot, owing to the distance they have to take the stone to Charters Towers. During the recess I had the pleasure, through the courtesy of Mr. Henry, of going from Cloncurry to Mount Oxide. I understand it is suggested that a railway should be taken from Cloncurry to Mount Oxide. Well, that would be one of the most expensive railways in Australia to construct, as it would run at right angles to the ranges and to the rivers. I maintain that no railway engineer who is untrammelled would recommend the Government to build a railway at right angles to rivers and mountains when he could follow the river and build the line at one half the cost. Mr. Phillips estimates the cost of this railway from Cloncurry to Mount Oxide at £550,000, that is about £3,750 per mile. I think he states that for about four-fifths of the distance the country is very rugged, and that over this country the cost of building a railway would be very expensive. If the railway was taken to its natural port—Burketown—very few engineering difficulties would be encountered. After passing the first 20 miles the line would traverse black soil forest country, and the cost of building a railway there would be small as compared with the cost of taking a line by the other route. At the present time, before the Mount Oxide people can make their mines pay they must get 25 per cent. of ore. They are now paying £7 a ton to take their ore from Mount Oxide to Cloncurry, or Burketown, or Normanton. Last week 43 or 45 tons of ore arrived at Normanton from Mount Oxide, which shows that from the carrier's point of view the road from Mount Oxide to Normanton is easier than the road from Mount Oxide to Cloncurry. I know that from inquiries I have made from a number of carriers, Mr. Henry has tried his very best to get carriers to take his ore from Mount Oxide to Cloncurry, but in no case has he been able to persuade a carrier to make that trip a second time. Many carriers will not go there at all, a fact which shows very clearly the opinion carriers have formed of the road. The railway should go from Mount Oxide to Normanton or Burketown. I am quite prepared to leave it to departmental experts to say which is the best port for the terminus of the railway, but I am absolutely certain that if justice is to be dealt out to that part of the country the railway will be built from Normanton or

Mr. Nevitt.]

Burketown to tap that mineral district. About two years ago there were in the Cloncurry district 1,295 mineral leases, 1,032 homestead leases, and 75 mining leases, and to-day, although they have a railway from there to Townsville, there are only 10 goldmining leases, 426 mineral leases, and 581 homestead leases, which shows that to a very great extent it has been a waste of money building that railway to develop the country. It has not developed the country, and it will not develop it, and that is not because they have not got fluxes in that district. The district is provided with an unlimited amount of flux; there is limestone and ironstone in abundance everywhere. The only thing they lack in that respect is coke or coal, and there is just a possibility that in the tableland country they will find coal. If they do that will give the district a very great impetus. Mr. Phillips in his report states that there are 7,000 square miles of mineral country in the district. The railway to Cloncurry has been in operation for some three years, and what amount of developmental work has been done in the district during that period?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Has the price of copper nothing to do with it?

Mr. NEVITT: The price of copper has a good deal to do with it. I readily admit that, but if we had railway communication such as I have indicated, then, even with the present price of copper, a great number of shows would be worked. And if the Government would erect State smelters, great saving would be effected in the working of the mines. I believe they would save something like from £8 to £12 per ton.

Mr. FORSYTH: There are plenty of smelters there.

Mr. NEVITT: There are not plenty of smelters there now. There is an unlimited quantity of ore, but what is needed is means of transit and sufficient smelters.

Mr. FORSYTH: The railway is there.

Mr. NEVITT: The railway is not there. The railway does not go to Mount Cuthbert. How much ore are they sending from Mount Cuthbert?

Mr. FORSYTH: It is too far away.

Mr. NEVITT: I say it is absolutely impossible to place the ore in smelters at Cloncurry from the places the hon. member is referring to. Had the hon. member fought for that railway, as he ought to have fought for it in times gone by, it would have been built and the district would have been in a better position than it is to-day.

Mr. FORSYTH: I got a railway.

Mr. NEVITT: Yes; the hon. member got the railway he fought for, but I am asking for another railway. I do not know whether we are going to get it, but if justice is to be dealt out to that district by this or any other Government, we shall get that line. The rainfall of the district is from 17 to 40 inches, and we have some of the finest cattle there to be found in Australia. The people of Victoria and New South Wales went there for their cattle to restock their depleted runs after the drought. They had to go to those places which this Government and other Governments in days gone by have despised, and if a drought took place again they would be in very little better position than they were then, so far as taking their stock from drought stricken areas to country where they could get pasture is concerned. Seventeen inches

[Mr. Nevitt.

is the minimum annual rainfall in that district within the memory of white men. But, as I say, if a drought took place to-morrow the majority of the sheep in the Western districts would perish as they did in 1892, 1893, and 1894. The other day I was looking over an old report by Dr. Jack, and I came across the following paragraph:—

SACRIFICE OF SUPERFICIAL ORES.

At the present time most of the mines are living on the sale, at a ruinous sacrifice, of the superficial ores, enriched through the action of the atmosphere and meteoric waters on the originally deposited sulphide ores. Owing to the dryness of the climate the water level is naturally at a considerable depth, and the inevitable change of cupriferos sulphides will be longer deferred than is usual in lands more favoured with a steady rainfall. Only a few of the mines have as yet reached the primary sulphides, but they may all expect to reach them in time. When that becomes general of course there will be no exportation of extremely rich ore, or if ore must be exported it will have to be in a highly concentrated form—ore-smelting must be carried out on the ground—

Showing that at the present time they are ruining that district by taking the rich ores, whereas if they had smelters and railway communication they would be able to

[10 p.m.] mix it with a great deal of the low-grade ores and thereby extract the full benefit conferred on them by Nature. I find another article which was printed in a paper called the *Croydon Record* in the year 1905. This should be interesting to the present hon. member for Moreton. It says—

The unanimity of the Assembly in approving of the proposal of the Government for the construction of the first section of the extension of the railway from Richmond towards Cloncurry was only what might have been expected. For months past this railway has been literally in the air. Its construction was advocated on every available occasion, the influence of Townsville and of Brisbane was brought to bear upon the matter, and it was evident for some months that more than the usual amount of lobbying was being done to gain support for the proposal. And in the meantime not a word of protest was heard from Normanston, the port which Nature intended should be the outlet for the Cloncurry district. This also was only what might have been expected, and the lethargy of the Gulf residents, as it has done for years, played right into the hands of the Townsville clique.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That was a Labour paper.

Mr. NEVITT: That was before the railway was built. It was not a Labour paper. It was a paper that was supporting the then Government. It goes on—

And now Cloncurry is to have a railway which will run through country in which the mines are not situated, whereas a line to Normanston would have traversed the heart of the mineral belt. But what of that!

That is exactly what I have already stated. It has only touched the fringe of that copper country, and, had the line gone another way, it would have been in a very much different condition to-day. The article goes on—

Townsville has thrown out another feeder, which will bring to it the trade of the rich north-west, a line that will rob the Gulf seaport of that which rightly belonged to it, and leave its residents to mourn their lost hopes and anathematise the false friends who broke their promises and betrayed their trust.

That is why I alluded, a while ago, to the fact that the present member for Moreton never raised his finger in this Chamber against sending out that railway to Cloncurry. I have a great number of notes, but I think I will let them remain over—

The TREASURER: "To be continued in our next." (Laughter.)

Mr. NEVITT: I have a few other interesting items which it might be advisable to bring under the notice of the Government. What I maintain is that if this railway had been constructed in that district it would have increased the value of the public estate, and our duty should be to see that that increase went into the right channels, and was not diverted into the pockets of the private speculators. If that line were built, it would greatly enhance the value of the public estate, and the public would get the benefit of that enhanced value. To show you that this party is on the right lines as far as advocating the construction of State lines and the non-alienation of land, only the other day I saw that President Taft, of the United States, recommended to Congress that in future his Government should not sell any land containing mineral of any shape or form, phosphates, or that had water frontage. That has been recommended to the Congress of the United States Senate, showing that the thinkers of America are in the same way of thought in that direction as the men on this side of the House. If we did not sell any of these water frontages or mineral rights, it would mean that the country would get the benefit instead of a few isolated individuals who get the benefit to-day. Another reason why this railway should be built is that the present Government received in the year 1907-8 the sum of £18,737 from pastoral holdings in the Gulf country, and they received from rents and occupation licenses a little over £5,000, making a total from lands of over £22,000. I do not think there is any district in Queensland where they have not got a railway where the Government receive as much rent as they are receiving in that district, and, if you give us a railway, you will be able to get more rent from that same country. You would also get some country that is not now held under any tenure at all, so that you would increase your revenue to a very great extent, and I maintain that any district where the Crown is getting something like £23,000 to £25,000 a year in the shape of rent is entitled to a railway. That amount would pay interest on £653,000 at 3½ per cent., and I maintain we are entitled to a railway in that district, as it would be no loss to the rest of the community, because if there was any loss at all on the working of that line the Government are getting money in the shape of land revenue. There were a greater number of people in the Gulf twenty years ago than there are to-day, and this condition has resulted from the system of taking railways from other places and tapping this country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Croydon was flourishing then.

Mr. NEVITT: I admit Croydon has gone down to a very great extent, but I say the fact of the trade having been taken away from those two ports to other places has been the means of taking away the population. In the year 1888 the sum of £54,000 was collected in Customs revenue in Normanton, and there was something like £5,000 collected in Customs revenue in Burketown, whereas to-day, owing to the tapping of that country by lines from other places, I do not think they collect £5,000 from the two ports. I say had this railway been constructed—I do not say there would have been as great an amount collected in revenue as there was in those

1910—s

days, but I do say this: There would have been a much greater amount collected than there is at the present time. That district is simply languishing for railways. As much as 2,000 tons of copper ore has gone over the Normanton wharves from that particular district. I have not the figures for the Burketown wharf, but a fair amount has gone over that. I say that instead of having an isolated mine such as Mount Cuthbert, Mount Oxide, and one or two other small shows there, we would have hundreds, aye thousands, of men working in that district to-day if we had railway communication. They are the type of men that has made Queensland, and yet what has the Government done to encourage them in that particular district? Have they done anything to encourage them to protect the resources which Nature has placed there? If the Government had dealt out justice, they would have had that railway years ago. The hon. member for Townsville is here now, and I wish to quote what he said in 1900. He said—

I do not think the people of Cloncurry should be compelled to send their goods over 500 miles of railway instead of 250 to Normanton. I think the Gulf trade should go to Gulf ports.

What did he say the other day? He said that the line should go from Cloncurry to Camooweal, so that the trade of Cloncurry should go to Townsville. Are the sentiments expressed in 1900 in accordance with the sentiments expressed a few days ago? The sentiments expressed in 1900 were fair and reasonable, but those expressed the other day were certainly not just sentiments. Three years later, in 1903, he said that he was anxious to give Cloncurry a railway line because he had built the Richmond line with that intention. I ask how any man can reconcile the statement he recently made with what he said ten years ago—that the Gulf trade should go to Gulf ports.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is very contradictory.

Mr. NEVITT: It is very contradictory, and it is owing to this injustice and misrepresentation that the Gulf is in the languishing condition in which we find it to-day. I noticed in an old file of the *Brisbane Courier* the other day that a member of the other Chamber, the Hon. W. H. Campbell, made use of this statement: He said it took ten days from Brisbane to Thursday Island, and five days from there to Normanton. We are certainly in a very outlandish and isolated spot, but we are not as bad as that. Why should any man deliberately make such a mis-statement as that—say that it takes fifteen days to get to the port of Normanton. I will give you the facts in connection with that. The boat leaves Brisbane on Wednesday after 5 o'clock, and we arrive at Thursday Island on Monday, or only five days, against ten days as stated by Mr. Campbell. Our troubles are great enough without having deliberate mis-statements made about us such as that hon. gentleman made use of there. The hon. member for Moreton the other night went out of his way to say that the Croydon and Normanton line had never been a paying line. I admit that that line is not a paying line, but at one time it paid as high as £3 5s. 7d. per cent., and had that line been carried to its proper objective—Georgetown—and connected with Cairns, the line would have been payable to-day, and the Georgetown district would have been in a much

Mr. Nevitt.]

more thriving condition. Why did he single out the Normanton-Croydon line as being a non-paying line? The line from Hughenden to Winton is a non-paying line, and the line that he is advocating from Julia Creek to Cloncurry is a non-paying line. As a matter of fact, we have 612 miles of railway in the southern part of Queensland to-day that are not paying interest on the money invested, and yet he went out of his way the other night to say the Normanton-Croydon line was a non-paying line.

Mr. MURPHY: We are badly enough off as we are without being kicked as we are being.

Mr. NEVITT: Yes. He gave that as an illustration of a mineral line that he would give a syndicate to build.

Mr. FORSYTH: Quite right.

Mr. NEVITT: Quite right! I will give you an instance of a mineral line that is paying a better rate of interest than any other line in Australia to-day, and that is the Mount Morgan line. He has quoted a mineral line that is not paying. Now, there is a line that is paying the best interest on any line in Australia to-day; therefore, from a mineral point of view, there is no argument that it should be given over to syndicates. Then the same gentleman had the audacity to ask that a railway should be constructed to Humptybong, and it would make that sanatorium available for Brisbane people. There are four railways down here to sanatoriums, and not one of them is paying, and yet the people of Queensland have to make up the deficit—the lines to Southport, Sandgate, Tweed Heads, and other places. Yet they want more representation. That is the way the Northern people have been treated, and yet the hon. member deliberately went out of his way to single out the Normanton railway. There is also something like 300 miles of railway which are not paying in the Central district, and it is not fair for the hon. gentleman to single out a line like that, and say it is not paying. All that I am asking for is justice—a fair deal and a square deal, nothing more and nothing less—and the people of the Gulf have not had a fair deal in the past.

Mr. MURPHY: Do you think they are going to get it?

Mr. NEVITT: I do not know whether they are going to get it or not. I shall take every opportunity, both in season and out of season, of pointing out to this or any future Government the injustice we have suffered in the past; first, on account of the large revenue received from the land in that district; and secondly, from the large mineral and pastoral country. There is some of the finest pastoral country there that we have in Queensland. It may not be the best fattening country, but it is the best breeding country we have in Queensland—all pastoralists admit that fact—and where you have country of that class, the people are entitled to some consideration. In conclusion, I sincerely hope that before they introduce any railway measures the Government will seriously take into consideration the resources of this particular district, and see whether they cannot deal out more even-handed justice to the people there in the future than they have dealt out in the past.

Mr. WALKER (*Wide Bay*): I wish first of all to endorse the remarks that have fallen from other members expressing regret at the death of the King, and sympathising with the Premier over the death of Mrs. Kidston. I

[*Mr. Nevitt.*

also congratulate the junior member for Maryborough for the way he moved the adoption of the Address in Reply, and the hon. member for Fassifern for his speech in seconding it. The junior member for Maryborough referred to the prosperity that existed throughout the State, and I can assure him and other hon. members that that prosperity extends to the country districts and does not rest with the city alone. In travelling round my electorate I noticed the prosperous condition of the people in many places. Many of the railway towns which were previously merely sidings are now small towns with two or three hotels, good stores, and a little community. We have a very fine programme put before us this session by the Government, and the only objection to it so far seems to be that there are not enough Bills in it. That is the only objection raised by the other side.

Mr. LENNON: Who said that?

Mr. WALKER: Members on the other side mentioned some Bills that were required.

Mr. LENNON: We would like to see some Bills out of it.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member for Carpentaria spoke about the necessity for the introduction of a Pure Foods Bill. I am in favour of such a Bill, but, as the Ministers have said, there are other Bills that may be introduced if time will permit.

Mr. ALLEN: It is a better Bill than the Police Offences Bill.

Mr. WALKER: That is a matter of opinion. I consider that the Police Offences Bill should have been brought forward before. Another Bill which I think we might pass this session, and which I understand the Minister for Agriculture has got ready, is the Margarine Bill. I doubt if we will get through all the Bills which are on the programme, but the Margarine Bill is only a small measure, and it should not take more than a few hours to go right through the House. It is not a contentious matter, and yet it is a matter of vital importance to dairying districts.

Hon. R. PHILP: Is there any margarine made in Queensland?

Mr. WALKER: Not yet. But you will judge how important the matter is when I say that the amount of margarine made in England is greater than the total output of butter in the Commonwealth. I hope the House will permit the Minister for Agriculture to introduce that Bill this session for the benefit of the dairying industry. The hon. member for Bowen made a very able speech to-night, but there were one or two of his remarks which had a bitter tone in them which was hardly called for, and when he talked about the alleged representatives of farming districts sitting on this side of the House I do not think that that criticism was altogether fair. With the exception of the hon. member for Cairns, all the farming representatives are on this side of this House.

Mr. BOWMAN: What about the hon. member for Herbert.

Mr. WALKER: I forgot about him.

OTHER LABOUR MEMBERS: And the hon. member for Bowen and hon. member for Bundaberg?

Mr. WALKER: It is strange that we should be called the alleged farming representatives, but I think that those members opposite who represent farming districts would be in better company if they were over on this side. It is not fair to talk about the middle-

men controlling the farming representatives on this side of the House. When the senior member for Townsville was leader of the Government, he passed the Meat and Dairy Encouragement Act, which allowed the farmers to get loans, similar to the loans which are now granted to co-operative bodies. There is no one freer from the middlemen today than the farmers and farming representatives that the hon. gentleman spoke about.

Mr. LENNON: No one more fleeced you mean.

Mr. WALKER: If the farmers in the Herbert would take a leaf out of the book of the farmers in the South, and go in for co-operative dairies and co-operative butter factories, and sell on co-operative lines through the co-operative society in England, they would do better for themselves. The same thing applies to other branches of the farming industry.

Mr. LENNON: Will it apply to sugar-cane?

Mr. WALKER: Yes; the co-operative society in London will be glad to handle your sugar for you.

Mr. LENNON: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company stand in the way.

Mr. WALKER: One hon. member spoke about a deputation which I introduced to the Premier. It was a deputation from a new society, and we wanted a grant, but the Premier did not want to establish a precedent by making a grant, but he granted us a loan. The hon. gentleman said if we went in for a land tax, it would provide sufficient money to enable the local authorities to get endowment from the Government. As hon. gentlemen opposite are against Government endowment, I do not see how they can say that it will provide an endowment to local authorities. At the present time we have a land tax in connection with the local authorities, and in my electorate I know farmers who are taxed up to the maximum of 6d. in the £1, and in addition to that they have a special rate of 3d. in the £1 to pay. The value of their land is £4 an acre, so that if the farmers can stand a land tax on top of that, they must be able to stand more than I thought they could.

Mr. COYNE: We want to remove those taxes.

Mr. WALKER: The indirect taxes which we have to pay at the present time are far better than the land tax proposed by the Labour party.

Mr. LENNON: What indirect taxes do you refer to?

Mr. WALKER: The indirect taxes which are levied on the farmers are better and more just than the land tax.

Mr. LENNON: They are very direct taxes.

Mr. WALKER: No; they are indirect taxes. We are far more contented with them. The only tax which we have at the present time which we regard as unfair is that with regard to sheep. A man with five sheep has got to pay just the same tax as the man with 1,000 sheep, and that is not quite fair. The diseases in stock tax and other similar taxes are quite justified in my opinion. We get a full return from the department for any tax we pay. If there is an outbreak of any disease in the district a veterinary surgeon comes up from the department straight away to inquire into it. Generally speaking, we farmers are quite contented with our lot. The

Labour party talk about the land tax breaking up land monopoly, but that is all bunkum. It will tax the good man and bad man all alike.

Mr. LENNON: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. WALKER: How can you make any difference with the exemption of £300. You cannot make any distinction over that amount. You will hit the good and bad man alike. We do not want a land tax.

Mr. LENNON: You will see we will do it.

Mr. WALKER: There are many anomalies in the Lands administration that we cannot well get over. I am just as anxious as the Labour party to see the conditions of the State improved, but, if the Labour party think they can get over the difficulties by imposing a land tax, I can tell them that it will not have the desired effect. In the North Coast district, as well as other districts, it [10.30 p.m.] is not only the man who drinks wine and champagne who holds more land than he has a right to hold, because the same thing is done by others—by the poor man as well as by the man who is not poor. Only recently, in the Biggenden district, four or five blocks were thrown open at £3 and some odd shillings per acre; seventy applications were put in, and 60 per cent. of the applicants already had land. This gave no chance to the man who put in an application because he wanted a home. I want to see an amendment in the Land Bill providing that the man who has no land shall have a further priority over the man who already has land. At the same time, I have no objection to a man getting a good lump of land if he can work it. But there is a tendency to speculate in land at the expense of the country, and it is done by all classes. Many people hold land adjoining roads, and the roads are in a continual state of bog from one year's end to the other. Another man knocks down the scrub, and increases the value of his own land as well as that of his neighbour. It is a pity we cannot deal more effectively with the man who does nothing with the land he holds; and I would support any measure which would compel him to work his land.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Put on a land tax.

Mr. WALKER: A land tax is no good. What we want is to compel a man to fall a percentage of his scrub every year—say, 5 per cent.—and then we shall be wiping out one of the biggest anomalies existing at the present time, and giving a chance to the genuine settler. Then, instead of having seventy applications for four or five blocks of land, we would have ten or fifteen, as the case might be. I have heard a good deal about the perpetual lease, but I understand that only one block has been taken up so far under that tenure.

Mr. LENNON: It is kept on the back shelf.

Mr. WALKER: Out of the seventy applications to which I have referred there was none for a perpetual lease; and it is a very funny thing that seventeen of the applicants were staunch Labour supporters.

Mr. LENNON: Do you think Labour supporters have no right to apply for land?

Mr. WALKER: It is a funny thing that they should ask us to take up land in a certain way, when they will not touch it themselves. I think the administration of the

Mr. Walker.]

Lands Department has been excellent, generally speaking, and I noticed that the criticism of the department came generally from town members.

Mr. BOWMAN: Do you include the hon. member for Warrego?

Mr. WALKER: I said "generally speaking." I believe the hon. member for Ipswich was the member who was strongest in his criticisms of the department. Taking into consideration that last year was a record year in regard to the taking up of land, I think members might honestly express their convictions and congratulate the Minister on the excellent work he has done. (Hear, hear!) There are some matters which I wish to bring forward, and because I am a Government supporter that is no reason why I should keep them in the background. I consider that our rangers should pay more attention to our scrub lands, and point out to the department lands suitable for settlement. During the last six months I have gone along some of these scrubs and found out what they were, and reported direct to the department. The rangers seem to think that all they should do is to see that selectors reside on their land, and that people do not run away with timber belonging to the Government. They do not seem to realise the fact that the land is there, or ask themselves what it is there for, and whether it is wise to have a growing forest harbouring lantana or to have the land thrown open to settlement. If they went into those matters, it would do a great deal of good.

Mr. LENNON: We had a rumpus over Tuche-koi last session.

Mr. WALKER: That reminds me that on the first Thursday of next month the whole of that land will be thrown open, and there will be from half a dozen to twenty applications for each block, and it will go off splendidly; so that what the Minister for Lands said last session was absolutely right. With regard to railway matters, I am glad to see the extensive programme before us, including the transcontinental line, which will link up our trunk lines. I heard to-night that this was a squatters' railway, and all that tommy rot. I say it is one of the finest propositions ever put before this House. It has been said that it is not going to be a good thing for Queensland; but it will open up a vast territory, in which I am given to understand, by the hon. member for Gregory and others, there is a smaller percentage of bad land than there is on the coast. If that is the case, it will be one of the best ways of bringing about closer settlement.

Mr. LENNON: You cannot have close settlement out there—it is impossible.

Mr. WALKER: I do not see anything to prevent men from having blocks which will run from 20,000 to 30,000 sheep; and I consider that this line will be a good thing for the country, more particularly as the whole of the land is Crown land. Fortunately for Queensland, but unfortunately for the people agitating for railways, we have too many good centres, and a member has to barrack very hard to get his particular line. The hon. member for Carpentaria spoke very strongly to-night with regard to the mineral deposits in his district, and made a very able speech. The only thing is that he wearied the House a little by its length. We have a very nice district, which it is proposed to open up by a railway. I suppose more members of Parliament on both sides have travelled over the route of the Mary River Valley line than have gone

[Mr. Walker.

over any other proposed railway route. Some fifteen or sixteen members from both sides have visited the district, and they were unanimously of opinion that it is a good proposition. In advocating that line, I think it should have been started long ago, taking into consideration the fact that men have been living there for the last twenty or thirty years, and that they have to bring their produce thirty miles. Cream is being carried thirty miles at the present time. Apart from the beautiful country along the route, there is an enormous area of Crown lands on the Brisbane side of the proposed railway which is suitable for close settlement. That is at the end of the first section, but I hope to see the line taken right through to Woodford, as there are something like 400,000,000 feet of soft woods there, part of which is held by small selectors. At the present time the large sawmills in Gympie and Maryborough are languishing for want of timber, and there is enough timber in that district to keep them going for another ten years. Considering that the royalty would be something like 1s. or 1s. 6d. per 100 running feet, the revenue derived from that source alone would more than pay for the railway. I hope that before long it will run right through to Durundur Station. There is a matter of administration to which I wish to refer, and that is the necessity for improving the station facilities at small centres like Cooroy, Cooran, Pomona, and some of the small centres in the Burnett district, which have grown very rapidly. I have had a good deal of trouble in getting the department to build the necessary improvements to cope with the increasing traffic. At Pomona, Cooroy, and Cooran we have an enormous amount of business, particularly in timber. The settlement outside Pomona has increased so rapidly that the business has got ahead of the department, and I regret to say that the promises which have been made to increase the facilities for coping with the traffic have not been kept. These are small matters, but they should be looked to, so that people may get their stuff away, and at a great deal less expense. Another matter which was mentioned by the hon. member for Bowen was with reference to the increases in wages which are promised by the Secretary for Railways. The hon. member also spoke of what that side did with regard to those increases. Now, hon. members on this side are just as eager as hon. members opposite to see the pay of Government employees increased. It was only last session that I had the pleasure of introducing a deputation with regard to this very matter, but I do not say that that had anything to do with the increases being given. Seeing hon. members on the other side claim to be so anxious to see wages increased I hope they will assist us to pass the legislation that is put before us. Nobody is more pleased than I that these increases are to be given. I think the lengthsmen have been poorly paid in the past. Their request for another 6d. a day was a moderate one, and I am glad it has been conceded. I hope that the ladies who attend to the small stations will also receive consideration when the Minister is framing his Estimates. Last session a great deal of capital was made on the other side about the motor-cars which were purchased by the Premier. This session they have nothing to say about motor-cars, but talk about the lift which is being put into this building. Is their silence regarding the motor-cars due to the fact that Mr. Fisher has bought a motor-car? I dare say that if Mr. Fisher installs a lift in

the Federal Parliament House, we shall hear no more from the hon. members opposite about the lift either. I hope that speeches will be short this session, so that we may get on with business, which is far more important than the Address in Reply. We have had two speeches to-night which have occupied four hours, and I really think it is too bad that the time of the House should be taken up to that extent. I only wish that a Bill had been introduced limiting the length of speeches to one hour, as such a measure would do a great deal of good. I hope the session will be a fruitful one; and, if hon. members are sincere, they will do all they can to help by making short speeches, and allow the Bills which are mentioned in the Speech to pass.

Mr. MAY: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at eleven minutes to 11 o'clock.
